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SPEAR

Nicolette and Aucassin

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Nicolette and Aucassin

A Troubadour's Tale

With a Critical and Biographical Introduction by
Edward Everett Hale, author of the translation

Illustrated



New York
D. Appleton and Company
1899

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NICOLETTE AND AUCASSIN

IT is now a hundred and fifty years since a French scholar discovered one manuscript copy of this little story in the Royal Library at Paris. This manuscript is still in the National Library, No. 2,168 (formerly 7,989^b). The original is in the Provençal language. The text is accompanied by little musical notes, which show to what airs the songs—or shall one say the chansons?—were sung. A precise photographic copy of it has been made, so that scholars can work over the detail. It has been frequently translated into English and German, and the reader will observe that any rendering into what we generally call French is virtually a translation from the Provençal text of the original. It was dramatized in France in 1779.

In 1887 Francis W. Bourdillon, the English scholar, who has done most toward putting this little story before modern readers in its happiest light, published in London an edition of the text, accompanied by his own translation. The following extended quotation is from his introduction to this volume, and presents much interesting matter, both as to the story itself and its history since its discovery in 1752:

“A beautiful story, which has survived some centuries, is usually sure to have suffered much the same fate as a jewel or vessel of pure gold, which has been from time to time remelted and remoulded to suit the taste of the immediate generation. But there are some few which, having been once securely treasured, have become still more safely

forgotten, and which, when restored at last to the light, are prized, like the quaint gold-work from an Etruscan tomb, not merely for the sake of a material precious in all generations, but even more because they bring back to a world grown older in tastes and likings the features and fancies of its younger days. Among the mediæval works of romance which have been thus preserved to us in authentic form there is none of greater interest or beauty than the little tale of 'Aucassin and Nicolette,' nor any that had apparently a more slender chance of survival. A single hastily written manuscript, preserved now in the National Library at Paris, and lost sight of, as it would seem, till the middle of the last century, has kept in existence this little work, which is now accounted one of the most precious remains of the old French literature, being not only of unique form, but also of unusual poetic beauty. The manuscript is unique, and is contained in a quarto volume, No. 2,168 fonds français, in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. The writing is on vellum, and belongs probably to about the end of the thirteenth century—at least one hundred years, therefore, after the composition of the work. The volume contains many other poems, some of the 'Lais' and 'Fables' of Marie de France, several Fabliaux, the 'Image dou Monde,' and other articles. It was perhaps a collection made for some person of wealth, and copied by professional copyists, for several handwritings are distinguishable. The writing of the part containing 'Aucassin' is not very good, and was evidently the work of a rapid and perfunctory penman, who never stopped to reflect what a puzzle later ages would find in distinguishing his o's and a's and e's.

"It was probably composed somewhere between 1150 and 1200, at the period, that is, when the great mediæval literature of France was reaching the height of its splendour; when it had lost, it is true, almost all traces of

the spontaneity and simplicity of its dawn, the vigorous naturalness of the early 'Chansons de Geste,' but had gained certain graces of style, and become artistic, definite, refined. 'Aucassin and Nicolette' belongs approximately to the period of the great Arthurian poems of Chrestien de Troyes, with which it shows some affinity of word and phrase. It is a strange fact that in England this great early French literature has been almost entirely neglected, although in its lifetime it was almost as much at home on this side of the Channel as on the other, and some of the more important remains of it which have come down to us were probably written in England. In France, however, and almost more in Germany, this literature has been the object of a great amount of keen interest and sedulous study. In these countries, therefore, 'Aucassin and Nicolette' has long been familiar, while in England it has remained, till recently, practically unknown except to students. It is true that a few book-hunters in search of collections of tales or of works illustrated by Bewick may have come across the story in English versions of Le Grand d'Aussy's 'Fabliaux ou Contes.' This compilation, first published in 1779, seems to have obtained considerable popularity not only in France, but in other countries; and in 1786 a selection of the stories was published in English, under the title of 'Tales of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,' since reprinted under various titles. Here, hidden among more or less unclean Fabliaux—like a pearl in a dunghill—is to be found the first English version of 'Aucassin and Nicolette'; but, as might have been expected after a second or third remove from the original—for even Le Grand d'Aussy worked from Sainte-Palaye's version—much of the peculiar charm has been lost, and little but the bare story remains. Ten years later, in 1796, appeared another selection of tales from Le Grand's work, rendered

into English verse by Mr. Gregory Lewis Way, and illustrated with woodcuts executed by T. and J. Bewick. The translator had evidently appreciated the beauty of this story, and his rendering has some grace and charm, though these are not exactly those of the original. He knew, apparently, none but Le Grand's bald version; and was so wholly unaware of the character and style of the old French work itself as to choose for its reproduction the singularly ill-suited medium of rhyming heroic verse.

"It was not till nearly a hundred years later, when these works had long passed into almost complete oblivion, that any real measure of interest in 'Aucassin and Nicolette' was aroused in England. This was mainly or entirely due to the impression made by Mr. Pater's fascinating description of it in his 'Studies in the History of the Renaissance,' first published in 1873. In 1880 an English rendering, made, however, not from the original, but from Bida's modern French version, appeared in America, under the title of 'The Lovers of Provence.' But it was not till the year 1887 that any translation direct from the early French appeared in the English language. In that year, by a curious coincidence, no less than three English versions appeared. The first was my own work set forth in a second edition, upon which I may observe that I had been engaged at intervals for some five years previous. The others were Mr. Lang's translation, and a translation by Mr. E. J. W. Gibb, the translator of the 'Forty Vezirs.' Mr. Gibb, finding two other translators in the field, did not publish his translation, but printed a small number of copies privately.¹

"The story, which this poet has told with such grace and beauty, has a superficial resemblance to the earlier tale of 'Floire et Blanceflor,' and a much stronger resem-

¹ A fourth was my version published in Boston, and reprinted here.
—E. E. H.

blance, amounting for part of the work to practical identity, to the later tale of 'Florent et Clarisse,' which forms one of the accretions to the romance of 'Huon de Bordeaux'; and it is usually taken for granted that the remanieur of this gigantic 'Chanson de Geste' had before him, either in manuscript or in memory, the actual 'Aucassin,' just as we have it, and worked the first part of it bodily into his continuation of 'Huon de Bordeaux' with intentional alterations and attachments. The relation of 'Aucassin' to 'Floire et Blanceflor' is much more shadowy. It was made the subject of an 'Inaugural Dissertation for proceeding to the Doctor's Degree' by Dr. Hugo Brunner (published at Halle, 1880), in which he has brought together a good deal of valuable and interesting matter. But his conclusion that the writer of 'Aucassin' took the earlier tale as his direct model and original ('Muster und Vorbild') is not borne out even by Dr. Brunner's own marshalling of the evidence, in which he appears rather as the ingenious special pleader than the impartial critic. Dr. Méril's judgment is much truer: 'Ce n'est pas . . . une seconde version du même sujet, mais une histoire réellement différente.'

"No doubt many of the most beautiful stories, poems, and plays in the world are not the original invention of the writers who have given them their most consummate form, and it does not necessarily detract from an author's merit, or even from his 'originality,' to have borrowed the plot of his story from some older source. It is, of course, possible that the poet of 'Aucassin' directly imitated either some older version of 'Floire et Blanceflor' than we now possess, or an already variant version of some still older legend, from which both tales are lineally descended, having become further and further separated at each fresh remodelling.

"But, on the other hand, if we fix our attention closely

on the story of 'Aucassin and Nicolette' as we now have it, it surely appears to be just the kind of story that a *trouvère* would be likely to invent, not wholly from his own imagination—some of its details may be, as well as its plot, suggested by reminiscences of other stories current and of known popularity at the time—but at least intended in all honesty to be a new story, and not a mere imitation of an old, or a variation, which some of his hearers might, as likely as not, recognise and resent. After all, the plot of the story is the least noticeable part of it, and just what an improvisatore might have strung together as he went on, partly from invention, partly from reminiscence. All the beauty of the work lies in the characters, scenes, and details; and it is just these, or at least the best of them, that have most appearance of being described at first hand, and from the poet's own observation or experience. The events of mere romance or hearsay are inferior. For instance, while the poet had certainly seen the seashore, and knew what a harvest a wreck was to the seaside folk, he passes quickly over the voyages and storms at sea, as if he had never himself gone *outré mer*. This is exactly what we should expect to find in an improvised story, which is sure to be always a more or less faithful photograph of the narrator's brain, the strength of light and shade varying according to the force with which things have impressed him. Again, the quaint 'Torelore episode,' which has so much puzzled critics, is just one which an ambitious story-teller would throw in to lend an element of the marvellous to his narration, founded, probably, on some genuine traveller's tale which had struck him by its strangeness, but distorted by his own reckless exaggerations, when he found himself suddenly freed from the restrictions of probability, in that paradise of all story-tellers, Wonderland. Further, the vagueness of everything beyond the immediate horizon—

the sea, where Saracen pirates or 'great and wonderful storms' may at any moment appear; the city of Carthage, where Nicolette's twelve brothers are 'all princes or kings'—all present rather the dreamlike pageantry of a single brain than the well-worn outlines of a long-descended legend. And what characters are more likely to have suggested themselves than those here presented—princely lover, captive maiden, impracticable parents? Are not such among the stock puppets of all romance? and can we make arbitrary distinctions, and say that in one story these characters are 'original,' in another they are copied?

"However little we know of the personality of the author, we know from his work a good deal of his mental qualifications, and that he must have been a person of quick eye, of poetic vision, and, in a small way, of Shakespearean acquisitiveness. The work is full of little vivid touches, which are evidently founded on memory and suggested by actual scenes. The castle in the story may not correspond with the castle of Beaucaire, but it was a real castle, with its half-ruined tower and postern gate leading into the street of the town; and the chamber overlooking the garden from which Nicolette escapes, and the dry moat, with its steep sides so hard to climb, and the spring at the edge of the forest, and the grassy overgrown forest-ways—all are fresh from the retina of the poet's eye. He further shows the true poet's power of adapting to his story a telling incident or bit of knowledge. Thus the warning of the watchman on the tower to the two lovers is evidently an imitation, or rather a pleasurable adaptation, of the *Aubade* or watch-song; while Professor Suchier has discovered a most interesting magic formula used of old by parted lovers to bring the loved one, which is evidently the foundation of Aucassin's address to the star. In the same way the episodes in 'the kingdom of Torelore' are

probably founded upon some fantastic tales of wonder which we can not trace. Where, again, had this writer heard of the custom to which the name of Couvade has been attached in modern times? Strabo mentions it as a trait of the inhabitants of Iberia, and Dr. J. A. H. Murray ('Academy,' November 19, 1892) thinks Strabo's account had 'come down through the middle ages as a commonplace of history.' The date of 'Aucassin,' however late we put it, must have been considerably earlier than the publication of Marco Polo, 1298, in which the custom first appears again in literature. But tales of marvel from the East had been making their way to Europe for some time before Marco Polo, and this may possibly have been among them.

"It is not impossible that the author of 'Aucassin' knew something of Greek literature. There is certainly a very suggestive, though it may be accidental, likeness between the lines in the first verse section of 'Aucassin'—

" 'Nus hom n'est si esbahis,' etc.,

and what the author of 'Daphnis and Chloe' says of his work:

"Ο καὶ νοσοῦντα ἰάσεται, καὶ λυπούμενον παραμυθήσεται.

And it is therefore not out of the question that he knew the form of a Greek play.

"Many things that we now look for as necessary to poetry are here conspicuously absent. Richness of colour, effectiveness of language, refinement of phrase, suggestive allusion—in fact, all that appeals to the man of letters but is lost on the man of action are almost, if not altogether, lacking. The graces of the later poetic art appear only in the most rudimentary form, as in the comparison:

" 'Plus es douce que roisin
Ne que soupe en mazerin—'

the naïveté of which recalls the lines in 'The Marriage of Sir Gawaine.'

" 'Sir Kay kissed that lady bright,
 Standing upon his feet;
 He swore, as he was trew knight,
 The spice was never soe sweete.'

"To us the comparison seems ludicrous, but in a nascent literature metaphor is taken very seriously. In 'Perceval le Galois' the hero muses a whole morning on the resemblance of three drops of blood fallen on the snow to the red and white of his lady's face, and is so deep in meditation that he pays no attention to the challenge of a friend, who attacks him in ignorance. It is a long distance from such crude attempts at heightening effect by metaphor to our present standards; and such heightening was not apparently in mediæval literature regarded as a property of poetry rather than of prose. In 'Aucassin' itself we find as much of it in the prose sections as in the verse, as where Aucassin, slaughtering his foes, is likened to a wild boar, or in the description of Nicolette. It is in the prose sections too, rather than in the verse, that we find attempts at what we should call word painting, the careful choice of picturesque and effective language, as in the celebrated description of Nicolette's escape from the tower; while in the verse descriptions, as the arming of Aucassin, the building of the bower, or the picture of Nicolette singing at the steps, the language is exceedingly simple. The grand pictures are apparently reserved of intention for the prose, in which the writer allows himself a greater flow of language.

"There is a purpose in the introduction of the 'Torelore episode,' in pursuance of which, although it does not help forward the plot, it yet forms an integral part of the writer's scheme. The little drama, so to call it, divides naturally into two parts or acts, each, to some ex-

tent, whole in itself, with its own development and its own dénouement. But the dénouement of the first act is only what musicians would call a 'half close'—we feel it is not the end. The end of the story must be, we feel throughout, the happy meeting of the two lovers, their final union in safety and at home. But before this, and as a foretaste of it, there is a preliminary meeting, a union in danger and exile, which we are content to accept as a breathing-space in the story. And here the writer felt the need of an interlude, an interlude that could relieve the strain on the attention, without distracting it from the characters or confusing the working out of the plot. Hence, having brought his hero and heroine safely together, after all the adventures and perils which compose the first act, he leaves them for three years at Torelore 'a grant aise et a grant deduit,' and to produce in his hearers a reflected sense of their relief and pleasure he has recourse to a scene of the purest farce.

"This twofold design, of a contrast and an interlude, is ample enough to explain and to justify the introduction of this episode; but there was, perhaps, yet a further intention in the poet's thoughts, subordinated to his other purposes, but still definite and effective; and that was, to give an opportunity for his hero to show himself in a new aspect, to prove that besides being what we have hitherto seen him, in love a visionary, in war a champion, he could also in common life be a practical and ordinary knight. We observe that on arriving at Torelore his first question is just what would have been that of any knight of the time who chanced to be exiled from his home, and had nothing but his sword to look to for a livelihood: Is the king at war? And throughout the 'Torelore episode' he behaves in the same straightforward and orthodox fashion: he is indignant with the king for keeping up an absurd and effeminate custom; immoderately amused at his ridiculous

warfare, and anxious to show him how a fight should really be carried on. In all this he is a great contrast to the Aucassin of the early scenes.

"The drama of character belongs to a later and more educated age than the drama of incident; and from the prominence of the latter in this story it might easily be overlooked that it contains a distinct effort toward the former, a conscious attempt both to delineate and to develop character. This is, naturally, to be noticed principally in the hero and heroine themselves. No other character is portrayed for us except in its relations to them, and for the sake of its influence on their characters or fortunes. But we may incidentally notice how varied and how lifelike are these subordinate characters, and how true to the invariable qualities of human nature in all time. What could be more realistic than the obstinate pride of birth in Aucassin's father, the kind-heartedness of the warder, the sturdy spirit of the ploughboy, the weakness of the King of Torelore, the good nature of the motherly viscountess? The shepherd boys are a study in themselves. Evidently the writer knew rustic nature well, and he paints from the life their habitual attitude of surly independence toward their superiors; their natures, easily moved by superstition, but still more easily moved by money; their underlying kindness of disposition, which is, however, carefully concealed under a manner of the grossest rudeness, especially when they think they are being 'domineered over.'"

In 1873 I was writing a story of the twelfth century, called "In His Name." For the purposes of the eighth chapter of that story I wanted a troubadour's tale, and I translated this from the collection of French stories known as the modern "Bibliothèque Bleue." Only the first part of the troubadour's story was needed for the purposes of "In His Name"; I published the whole story in 1874 in

"Old and New," a magazine which was then edited by me. I did not know, nor indeed care, that there had been any earlier version. It seems, however, that in the year before this Walter Pater, in his charming essay on "The Renaissance," which has been so widely read from that day to this, selected "Aucassin and Nicolette" as an illustration of what he calls a renaissance earlier than what we generally call by that name. He says that below the intense love poetry of Provence "there was probably a wide range of literature, less serious and elevated, reaching by lightness of form and comparative homeliness of interest an audience which the concentrated passion of those higher lyrics left untouched." This literature has long since perished, or lives only in later French or Italian versions. One such version, the only representative of its species, M. Fauriel thought he detected in the story of "Aucassin and Nicolette." Mr. Pater goes into a delicate and interesting analysis of the plan of the story and of its execution, handling it indeed with the sort of reverence which the only existing monument of an old literature deserves.

Since Mr. Pater's reference to the poem it has received much attention from literary men—and shall I say from lovers of good stories?—in England and in America. Mr. Pater, in editing his own essay, refers us to Vernon Lee's paper on "Outdoor Poetry." In the same connection I can not but copy what Lowell says so well of outdoor poetry, that "the ballad singers had that education for uplifting which comes from life in the open air, and from that only."

I will not even pretend to give a list of the different English versions since Mr. Pater's paper. In the authors' catalogue of Harvard University and of the Boston Public Library I find the following titles:

Aucassin and Nicolette. Done into English verse by Andrew Lang. (Portland: Thomas B. Mosher. One hundred and fifty copies printed.)

Aucassin and Nicolette. Translation of Henry and Thompson. (Copeland & Day, Boston, 1898.)

Aucassin and Nicolette. Reproduced by the care of F. W. Bourdillon. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1896.)

Aucassin and Nicolette. Translation in modern French by Alexandre Bida. English verse by Rodney Macdonough. (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1880.)

The Boston Library also contains the text of the opera referred to above, printed in 1780 with the music of Grétry; also my version, of which the first issue was in 1873. The reader will be interested in comparing a few of the translations. I have found nothing in English earlier than the cumbrous version of "the late G. L. Way," originally printed in 1796. It is the edition with the pretty Bewicks. The "late Mr. Way" had "upset" the rhythm of the original into stately English verses, and he did the same by the prose. So we do not have the pretty little transitions "here they sing it" or "here they say it." It is all alike, all equally stately and equally dull. Nobody should be blamed if it never were remembered or never forgotten. Here is the first of the little chansons of what I like to call our little vaudeville:

"What wight is he that fain would now be told
Of rare adventures, fallen in days of old?
Sweet verse I sing, and goodly deeds I tell,
Of a young pair who loved each other well.
Young were they both, in love their hearts were set,
Their names were Aucassin and Nicolette.
All that the youth assayed by day or night
For his sweet maid with skin like lily white,
And all his prowesses and all his pains
The fruitful compass of my tale contains.
So chaste, so cheerful, their love's strain doth flow,
No wight so sad but this must wake from woe.
No wight, though stretched upon his bed he lie
With pain distraught, or worn with malady,

But while he hears shall quick recovery meet
So touching is the tale, so passing sweet."

My own freer translation is:

"Who will listen yet again
To the old and jovial strain—
The old tale of love that's always new?
She's a girl that's fair as May;
He's a boy as fresh as day;
And the story is as gay as it is true.

"Who will hear the pretty tale
Of my thrush and nightingale—
Of the dangers and the sorrows that they met?
How he fought without a fear
For his charming little dear—
Aucassin and his loving Nicolette?

"For, my lords, I tell you true
That you never saw or knew
Man or woman so ugly or so gray
Who would not, all day long,
Sit and listen to the song
And the story that I tell you here to day."

Mr. Bourdillon, in 1887, printed the original text.
The passage quoted above is in the following words:

"Qui vauroit bon vers o-ir
Del deport du viel caitif,
De deus biax enfans petis,
Nicholete et Aucassins,
Des grans paines qu'il souffri,
Et des proueces qu'il fist
Por s'amie o le cler vis?
Dox est li cans, biax est le dis,
Et cortois et bien asis.
Nus hom n'est si esbahis,
Tant dolans ni entrepris,
De grant mal amaladis,
Se il l'oït, ne soit garis,
Et de joie resbaudis,
Tant par est douce."

The reader will be glad to see Mr. Bourdillon's rendering:

"Who would list a goodly lay,
Pleasure of the old man's day,
Of two children, fair and feat,
Aucassin and Nicolette,

Of the grievous pains he bare,
 And the great deeds he did dare,
 All for his bright-favoured fair?
 'Good is the lay, sweet is the note,'
 Dainty too, and deftly wrought.
 There is no man so distraught,
 None so wretched, so foredone,
 Sick with so great sickness none,
 If he hear, shall not be cured,
 And of gladness reassured,
 So sweet it is!"

Mr. Andrew Lang introduces the story with the following preface:

- "Where smooth the southern waters run
 Through rustling leagues of poplar gray,
 Beneath a veiled, soft, southern sun,
 We wandered out of yesterday;
 Went maying in that ancient May
 Where fallen flowers are fragrant yet,
 And lingered by the fountain spray
 With Aucassin and Nicolette.
- "The grass-grown paths are trod of none
 Where through the woods they went astray;
 The spider's traceries are spun
 Across the darkling forest way;
 There come no knights that ride to slay,
 No pilgrims through the grasses wet,
 No shepherd lads who sang their say
 To Aucassin and Nicolette.
- "'Twas here by Nicolette begun
 Her lodge of boughs and blossoms gay;
 'Scaped from the cell of marble dun,
 'Twas here the lover found the fay;
 O lovers fond, O foolish play!
 How hard we find it to forget
 Who fain would dwell with them as they
 With Aucassin and Nicolette!"
- "Prince, 'tis a melancholy lay,
 For youth, for life, we both regret.
 How fair they seem, how far away,
 With Aucassin and Nicolette!"

EDWARD EVERETT HALE.





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Fac-simile of a miniature showing embattled castle and military uniforms of the fifteenth century	

NICOLETTE AND AUCASSIN

A TROUBADOUR'S TALE



I

Who will listen yet again
To the old and jovial strain—
The old tale of love that's always new?
She's a girl that's fair as May;
He's a boy as fresh as day;
And the story is as gay as it is true.

II

Who will hear the pretty tale
Of my thrush and nightingale—
Of the dangers and the sorrows that they met?
How he fought without a fear,
For his charming little dear—
Aucassin and his loving Nicolette?

III

For, my lords, I tell you true
That you never saw or knew,
Man or woman so ugly or so gray,
Who would not, all day long,
Sit and listen to the song
And the story that I tell you here to-day.

YOU must know, my lords and my ladies, that the Count Bougars de Valence chose to make war with the Count Garin de Beaucaire. And the war was so cruel that the count never let one day go by but that he came thundering at the walls and barriers of the town, with a hundred knights, and with ten thousand men-at-

arms, on foot and on horseback, who burned all the houses, and stole all the sheep, and killed all the people that they could.

The Count Garin de Beaucaire was very old, and was sadly broken with years. He had used his time very ill, had the Count de Beaucaire. And the old wretch had no heir, either son or daughter, except one boy, whose name was Aucassin.

Aucassin was gentle and handsome. He was tall and well made. His legs were good, and his feet were good; his body was good, and his arms were good. His hair was blond, a little curly. His eyes were like gray fur, for they were near silver, and near blue, and they laughed when you looked at them. His nose was high and well placed. His face was clear and winning. Yes, and he had everything charming, and nothing bad about him. But this young man was so wholly conquered by love (who conquers everybody), that he would not occupy himself in any other thing. He would not be a knight; he would not take arms; he would not go to the tourneys; he would not do any of the things he ought to do.

His father was very much troubled by this, and said to him one morning:

"My son, take your arms, mount your horse, defend your country, protect your people. If they only see you in the midst of them, this will give them more courage; they will fight all the better for their lives and their homes, for your land and mine."

"Father," said Aucassin, "why do you say this to me? May God never hear my prayers if I ever mount horse, or go to tourney or to battle, before you have yourself given to me my darling Nicolette—my sweetheart whom I love so dearly."

"My son," said the father to him, "this can not be.

Give up forever your dreams of this captive girl, whom the Saracens brought from some strange land, and sold to the viscount here. He trained her; he baptized her; she is his god-child. Some day he will give her to some brave fellow who will have to gain his bread by his sword. But you, my son, when the time comes that you wish to take a wife, I will give you some king's daughter, or at least the daughter of a count. There is not in all France a man so rich that you may not marry his daughter, if you choose."

So said the old man. But Aucassin replied:

"Alas, my father! there is not in this world the principality which would not be honoured if my darling Nicolette, my sweetest, went to live there. If she were Queen of France or of England, if she were Empress of Germany or of Constantinople, she could not be more courteous or more gracious; she could not have sweeter ways or greater virtues."

[Now they sing it]

All the night and all the day
Aucassin would beg and pray—
"Oh, my father! give my Nicolette to me."
Then his mother came to say—
"What is it that my foolish boy can see?"

"Nicolette is sweet and gay."

"But Nicolette's a slave.
If a wife my boy would have,
Let him choose a lady fair of high degree."
"Oh, no! my mother, no!
For I love my darling so!
Her face is always bright,
And her footstep's always light;
And I can not let my dainty darling go.
No, mother dear, she rules my heart;
No, mother dear, we can not part."

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

When the Count Garin de Beaucaire saw that he could not drag Nicolette out from the heart of Aucassin, he

went to find the viscount, who was his vassal; and he said to him:

"Sir Viscount, we must get rid of your god-child Nicolette. Cursed be the country where she was born! for she is the reason why I am losing my Aucassin, who ought to be a knight, and who refuses to do what he ought to do. If I can catch her, I will burn her at the stake, and I will burn you too."

"My lord," replied the viscount, "I am very sorry for what has happened; but it is no fault of mine. I bought Nicolette with my money; I trained her; I had her baptized; and she is my god-child. I wanted to marry her to a fine young man of mine, who would gladly have earned her bread for her, which is more than your son Aucassin could do. But, since your wish and your pleasure are what they are, I will send this god-child of mine away to such a land, in such a country, that Aucassin shall never set his eyes upon her again."

"See that you do so!" cried the Count Garin to the viscount, "or great misfortunes will come to you."

So saying, he left his vassal.

The viscount had a noble palace, of high walls, surrounded by a thickly planted garden. He put Nicolette into one of the rooms of this palace, in the very highest story. She had an old woman for her only companion, with enough bread and meat and wine, and everything else that they needed to keep them alive. Then he fastened and concealed the door, so that no one could go in; and he left no other opening but the window, which was very narrow, and opened on the garden.

[Now they sing it]

Nicolette was put in prison;
And a vaulted room
Wonderfully built and painted
Was her prison home.

The pretty maiden came
To the marble window-frame:
Her hair was light,
Her eyes were bright,
And her face was a charming face to see.
No; never had a knight a maid
With such a charming face to see.

She looked into the garden close,
And there she saw the open rose,
Heard the thrushes sing and twitter—
And she sang in accent bitter—
“Oh! why am I a captive here?
Why locked up in cruel walls?
Aucassin, my sweetheart dear,
Whom my heart its master calls,
I have been your sweetheart for this livelong year:
That is why I’ve come
To this vaulted room;
But by God, the son of Mary, no!
I will not be captured so,
If only I can break away, and go.”

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

So Nicolette was put in prison, as you have just heard; and soon a cry and noise ran through the country that she was lost. Some said that she had run away; others said that the Count Garin de Beaucaire had killed her.

All in despair at the joy which this news seemed to cause to some people, Aucassin went to find the viscount of the town.

“Lord Viscount,” he asked him, “what have you done with Nicolette, my sweetest love, the thing in all the world which I love best? You have stolen her! Be sure, viscount, that if I die of this the blame shall fall on you. For surely it is you who tear away my life in tearing away my darling Nicolette!”

“Fair sir,” answered the viscount, “do let this Nicolette alone, for she is not worthy of you. She is a slave whom I have bought with my deniers; and she must serve as a wife to a young fellow of her own state, to a poor

man, and not to a lord like you, who ought to marry none but a king's daughter, or at least a count's daughter. What should you be doing for yourself if you did make a lady of this vile creature, and marry her? Then would you be very happy indeed, very happy; for your soul would abide forever in hell, and never should you enter into paradise."

"Into paradise?" repeated Aucassin angrily. "And what have I to do there? I do not care to go there if it be not with Nicolette, my sweetest darling whom I love so much. Into paradise? And do you know who those are that go there—you who think it is a place where I must wish to go? They are old priests, old cripples, old one-eyed men, who lie day and night before the altars, sickly, miserable, shivering, half-naked, half-fed, dead already before they die. These are they who go to paradise; and they are such pitiful companions that I do not desire to go to paradise with them. But to hell would I gladly go; for to hell go the good clerks, and the fair knights slain in battle and in great wars, the brave sergeants-at-arms, and the men of noble lineage; and with all these would I gladly go."

"Stop!" says the viscount. "All which you can say, and nothing at all, are exactly the same thing. Never shall you see Nicolette again. What you and I may get for this would not be pleasant if you still will be complaining. We all might be burned by your father's command—Nicolette, you, and I myself into the bargain."

"Despair!" said Aucassin to himself. And he left the viscount, who was quite as much disturbed as he.

[*Now they sing it*]

Then Aucassin went home;
But his heart was wrung with fear
By the parting from his dainty dear,

His dainty dear so fair,
Whom he sought for everywhere;
But nowhere could he find her, far or near.

To his palace he has come,
And he climbs up every stair:
He hides him in his room,
And weeps in his despair.
"Oh, my Nicolette!" said he,
"So dear and sweet is she!
So sweet for that, so sweet for this,
So sweet to speak, so sweet to kiss,
So sweet to come, so sweet to stay,
So sweet to sing, so sweet to play,
So sweet when there, so sweet when here,
Oh, my darling! Oh, my dear!
Where are you, my sweet, while I
Sit and weep so near to die,
Because I can not find my darling dear?"¹

[*Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it*]

While Aucassin was mourning thus in his room, always grieving for Nicolette his love, the Count Bougars de Valence was keeping up his war against the Count Garin de Beaucaire.

He had drawn out his footmen and his horsemen to assail the castle; and the defendants of the castle seized their arms to meet him, and ran to the gates and walls where they thought the besiegers would attack. The people of the town followed the knights and the sergeants: they mounted the ramparts, and poured down a storm of quarrels and javelins.

In the most terrible moment of the assault the Count Garin de Beaucaire came into the room where Aucas-

¹The original is very pretty, and can be guessed out, even by the unlearned reader:

"Nicolette biax esters,
Biax venir et biax alers
Biax déduis et dous parlers,
Biax borders et biax jouers,
Biax baisiers, biax acolers."

Biax is beata.

sin was grieving in his sorrow for his sweet darling, Nicolette.

"Oh, my boy!" he said, "what are you doing here while your castle is besieged, good and strong though it be? Do you know that if you lose it you are disinherited? Boy, take your arms, mount your horse, defend your lands, and lead your men to battle. As soon as they see you in the midst of them, they will bravely defend their homes and their lives, your lands and mine. You are tall and strong, and you ought to show that you are."

"Father," replied Aucassin, "what are you talking about? May God refuse me all that I may ever ask him if I consent to be made a knight, to mount a horse, or to go to fight before you have given me Nicolette, my darling sweetheart!"

"Boy," replied his father, "this can not be. I had rather be disinherited, and lose all I have, than that you should have her for your wife."

On this the Count Garin de Beaucaire turned away. But Aucassin called him back, and said to him: "Come, father, I beg you! I have one condition to propose to you."

"What is that, dear boy?"

"It is this. I will take my arms, I will mount my horse, and I will do my duty bravely, on condition that, if God bring me out of the battle unhurt, you will let me see my darling sweetheart, Nicolette, and embrace her. There shall be time to say two or three words to her, and to kiss her once."

"I grant it willingly," said the father, and he went away.

[Now they sing it]

Not diamonds bright, or heaps of gold
Would give to you such bliss
As blessed this boy when he was told
The way to earn a kiss.

They quickly brought him arms of steel,
His helmet and his crest;
Upon his head the helmet laced;
And then a double hauberk braced
Across his breast.

He springs upon his charger white;
And when he glances on his feet
His greaves are tight and silver bright:
His darling dear he thinks upon;
He spurs his war-horse fleet,
And rushes straight before him down
To the fight.

[Here they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

Aucassin was armed, then, as you have heard. How bright his shield as it hung from his neck! how well his helmet fitted his head! and how his sword clanged, hanging upon his thigh!

The young man was tall, strong, handsome, and well armed. His horse was swift, and he was soon at the castle gate.

Now do not think he was thinking the least in the world of capturing oxen or cows or goats! No, nor of giving mortal blows to the knights or the other soldiers of Count Bougars de Valence! Oh, no, not he! He had something else in his head and in his heart, for he was thinking of Nicolette, his darling sweetheart. So he even forgot to hold up his reins; and his horse, as soon as he once felt the spurs, carried him in full mêlée into the very middle of his enemies.

They were overjoyed at such luck. They surrounded him, and seized his lance and his shield, and, as they led him away prisoner, began to ask each other with what death they would make him die.

"Alas!" said Aucassin to himself, "these are my mortal enemies, who are leading me away to cut off my head. But, if my head is cut off, I shall never be able to speak again to Nicolette, my darling sweetheart."

Then he added: "I still have my good sword. I am mounted on a strong horse. If he does not save me from the *mêlée*, it is because he never loved me, and then may God never help him!"

So he grasped his sword in his hand, and drove his spurs into his horse's side again, and struck to right, and struck to left, and cut and thrust. At every blow he chopped off heads and arms, and all around him he made the place bloody and empty, as a boar does when he is assailed by dogs in a forest. Ten knights were thus maimed, and seven others were wounded. Then he withdrew at once from the *mêlée*, with his horse at full gallop, still grasping his sword in his hand.

The Count Bougars de Valence had heard they had captured his enemy Aucassin, and that they were going to hang him. He came up there at just this moment. Aucassin recognised him, and struck him a heavy blow with his sword full on his helmet, so that it was crushed down upon his head, and he fell stunned upon the ground. Then the young man took him by the hand to help him up, and, as soon as he could stand, took him by the nose-piece of his helmet, and led him, without more ado, to his father, the Count Garin de Beaucaire, to whom he said:

"Father, here is your enemy, who has fought so long against you, and done you so much mischief. This war which he has made against you has lasted now for twenty years, and no one has been able to bring it to a good end. But I hope it is finished to-day."

"Dear son," replied the old count, "such feats of youth as this are worth much more than your foolish loves."

"Father," replied Aucassin, "do not begin to preach to me, I beg you. Think, rather, of keeping the promise which you gave to me."

"What promise, my dear boy?"

"What! have you already forgotten it, my father? By my head! forget it who will, I shall remember it. What! my father, do you not remember that when I consented to arm myself, and go and fight this count's people, it was on condition that, if God should bring me out of the battle unhurt, you would let me see my darling sweetheart Nicolette, and say two or three words to her, and kiss her once? As you promised this, my father, so you must perform."

"I hear," replied the count, "but I do not understand. It is impossible that I ever promised anything so foolish. Why, if your Nicolette was here, I should burn her without pity, and you yourself might expect the same fate."

"Is that all, my father?" said Aucassin.

"Yes," replied the count.

"Certes," replied the boy, "I am very sorry to see a man of your age such a liar!"

Then he turned toward the Count de Valence, and said to him, "Count de Valence, are you not my prisoner?"

"Certainly."

"Give me your hand, then, I beg you."

"Gladly," replied the count, and he placed his hand in Aucassin's.

Aucassin replied, "Count de Valence, pledge me your faith that, whenever you have the wish or the power to shame my father, or to hurt him, in his person or in his goods, you will do so."

"Pardieu, sir! do not mock me, but name my ransom. Ask for gold or silver, horses or palfreys, dogs or birds, and I will try to give you what you ask. This is another thing."

"What!" cried Aucassin, "do you not own yourself my prisoner?"

"Indeed I do," cried the Count de Bougars.

"Well, if you will not take the oath I demand, your head shall fly off!"

"Enough! I take the oath you exact," said the count quickly.

Then Aucassin ordered a horse for him, mounted another, and led him to a place of safety.

[*Now they sing it*]

Now when the Count Garin
Finds out that Aucassin
His darling sweet
Will not forget,
His darling of the charming face,
He claps him in a dungeon,
In a cellar underground,
All walled in with heavy stones,
Built double thick around;
And my wretched Aucassin
So sad as now had never been.

"Oh, my darling Nicolette!"
In his misery said he,
"My darling dear of charming face,
My darling fleur-de-lis,
My darling sweeter than the grape,
My darling, list to me,
Imprisoned in this horrid place.

"The other day a pilgrim gray
From Limousin had made his way,
And on the straw the poor man lay,
So sick was he, and near to die.
But Nicolette passed by his door.
The pilgrim heard my darling's feet
Pit-pat across the floor;
He saw my darling's little cloak
Her cape so white, her ermine bright;
And though no word she spoke,
Yet, when he saw my darling sweet,
The poor old pilgrim raised his head,
And, cured by her, he left his bed,
And took his staff, and took his way,
And found his home once more.

" Oh, darling dear! oh, fleur-de-lis!
So sweet to come, so sweet to stay,
So sweet to sing, so sweet to play,
So sweet for that, so sweet for this,
So sweet to speak, so sweet to kiss,
Who is there who my love can see,
And hate a girl so sweet as she?
For you, dear child, your love is bound
In this dungeon underground:
Here they will see me die alone
For you, my fleur-de-lis! "

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

Aucassin was thrown into prison, as you have just heard. And Nicolette, on her part, was still in the vaulted room, imprisoned also.

It was in the summer-time in the month of May, when the days are so warm, and so long, and so full of light, and the nights so sweet and so serene. Nicolette lay in her bed, and saw the moon shine clear through the window, and heard the nightingale sing among the trees of the garden. She remembered Aucassin, the friend she loved so well, and she began to sigh tenderly. Then she thought upon the deadly hatred of the Count Garin de Beaucaire, and she knew that she was lost if she remained in this room, and that her dear Aucassin would be lost also if he remained in his dungeon.

Then she looked at the old woman who was set to guard her, and she saw that she was asleep. Nicolette rose quickly, threw a fine silk mantle which she had saved over her shoulders, took the sheets and coverlet of her bed, made of them as long a rope as she could, and tied it to the window-post. When she had done this, she seized it with both hands, one above and one below, and slid down upon the turf, which was covered with dew. Thus she descended into the garden.

Nicolette's hair was blond, fine, and curly; her eyes were soft and laughing; her complexion was fair and fresh;

her nose high and well placed; her lips were redder than cherries and roses in summer-time, and her teeth white and small. You could span her little waist with your two hands; and the daisies which she broke when she stepped upon them, as they fell back upon her ankles, seemed black against her feet, so fair was this girl.

She went to the garden gate and opened it; she walked through the streets of Beaucaire by the light of the moon, and strayed here, and strayed there, till she found the tower in which was her sweetheart Aucassin. This tower had loopholes on each side.

Nicolette crept in behind one of the pillars, wrapped herself in her mantle, and thrust her blond head into one of the crevices, so that she could hear the voice of her dear Aucassin, who was weeping within bitterly, in great grief for the loss of his darling sweetheart, who was absent from his eyes. And when Nicolette had heard him, she resolved to speak to him in turn.

[Now they sing it]

Nicolette, of lovely face,
Rested in this darksome place,
 Against a pillar, where
The heavy wall her lover kept:
She heard her darling as he wept
In his despair.

Then, in turn, to him she cried,
 "Aucassin, of noble race,
 Freeman born, and proud of place,
Why should you complain and grieve,
Because you must your sweetheart leave?
 Your father fain would burn me,
 And all your kinsmen spurn me.
From you, my darling love, I flee:
I shall go and cross the sea,
In other lands than this to be."

Then she cut off her golden hair,
And threw it to her lover there.

Each heavy lock, each pretty curl,
Aucassin in rapture prest,
And hid them on his panting breast,
While he wept in his despair
For his darling girl.

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

When Aucassin heard Nicolette say that she was going to another country, he was very much distressed.

"My darling sweetheart," he said, "you shall never go; for that would be to give me my death-blow, and the most cruel death-blow of all. The first man that saw you would take you for his own; and, when I heard that, I should plunge my knife into my heart. No, I would not do that! I would run with all my might against a wall or a rock, and I would throw myself head first upon it, with such a plunge that my eyes should spring out, and I would brain myself. I would rather by a hundred times die such a death than know that you belonged to any other man!"

"Aucassin," replied Nicolette, "I do not believe that you love me as much as you say; but I am quite sure that I love you more than you love me."

"Never!" replied Aucassin. "Oh, my darling sweetheart! you can not love me more than I love you. No woman can love man as man loves woman; for woman's love is in her eye, it is in the tip of her toe, and the end of her finger: but man's love is in the bottom of his heart, and so firmly does it grow there that it can never be uprooted."

So did Aucassin and Nicolette talk together when the watchmen of the town came up by the next street, with their swords hidden under their cloaks.

The Count Garin had bidden these men kill Nicolette if they could take her; and just as they were coming up where they would see her, and run to seize her, the lookout on the tower saw them.

"What a pity," cried he, "to kill so pretty a girl as this! It would be a mercy to warn her before these wretches see her. For, as soon as they kill her, my boy Aucassin will die; and that would be a pity, certes!"

[Now they sing it]

Now, I tell you that this lookout
Was as courteous as brave,
And so this song the man began,
Poor Nicolette to save—
"Oh, my pretty girl!" said he,
"Whose heart can beat so true and free,
Whose eyes are bright, whose form is light,
And whose face is so sweet to see,
I know you're watching there
For your lover underground;
He weeps for you in his despair,
Bolted, barred, and bound.
Now, maiden, list to me:
Of the night-watch beware,
For they are passing by,
A hidden sword on every thigh;
Hide yourself as they pass by;
Maiden, beware."

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

"Ah!" replied Nicolette to the lookout, "may God grant eternal repose to the souls of your father and your mother for this kindly warning you have given to me! I will take care of the rascals, whoever they may be; and in this the good God will help me."

So saying, she wrapped herself in her mantle as closely as she could, and hid herself silently in the shadow of the pillar. So she waited till the watchmen had passed by; and, when she thought them far enough gone, she took leave of Aucassin, and went her way.

So she came to the castle walls. Now these were broken in many of the joints; and the active girl was able to let herself down, with the help of her hands, as a little four-footed kid would have done. But, when she was half-

way down, she looked into the ditch, and she was frightened to see how sheer and steep it was.

"Oh, my dear Maker God!" she whispered, "if I let myself fall, I shall break my neck; if I stay where I am, they will seize me, and burn me: well, one death with another, I had rather run the risk of being killed than serve as a sight for all the people to-morrow."

So she made the sign of the cross, and let herself slide down the face of the wall to the very bottom of the ditch. Then she looked at her pretty feet and her pretty hands, which had never known what it was to be wounded before. They were all scratched and torn, and the blood flowed from them in a dozen places. But Nicolette felt no pain, because she was still so much afraid; for she had only succeeded in getting into the ditch, and now she must get out again.

The bold girl tried here, and she tried there, for she knew that it was a bad place to stay in; and at last she found one of the pointed stakes, which the defenders of the castle had thrown down on the besiegers when they were attacked. This she took, and with its aid she clambered up the reverse of the ditch, step after step. And soon she was at the top, though not without great pains.

The woods were two arbalist shots away from her—woods which stretched thirty leagues this way, and thirty leagues that way, all haunted by wild beasts and venomous serpents. Poor Nicolette was frightened to death when she thought of them, because she did not want to be eaten alive; but still she pressed on, because she had no more wish to be burned alive.

[Now they sing it]

Nicolette, of lovely face,
Clambered from the ditch so deep,
And then began to wail and weep,
And to Jesus Christ to cry:

" Father, king of majesty,
I do not know
Where I shall go;
For if, in flight, I should
Lose me in the wood,
The boars and lions grim
Would tear me limb from limb;
But if men find me anywhere,
And to the town I am returned,
They'll light a fire in the square,
And to the stake will tie me there,
And my body will be burned.

" No, my God, no!
Hear me as I cry;
It shall not be so;
Better far that I
By the wolves be hunted down,
Than go captive to the town
So to die!

" I will not go."

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

Nicolette grieved, as you have heard, and then commended herself to God, and plunged into the woods, but did not dare go too far in, for fear of beasts and snakes.

She walked along for some time by the edge of the wood, frightened to death, starting at the slightest sound, and then going forward again with the utmost care. She walked this way and that, till she was so tired that she could walk no longer, and she lay down on a smooth bed of grass and went to sleep; and there she slept till morning.

Early in the morning some shepherds passed by, on their way toward the town, as they were driving their sheep and herds to feed between the woods and the river. Now there was a fresh fountain near the place where Nicolette was lying; and it happened that the shepherds came to the fountain, and spread a cloak on the grass, and put their bread upon it, and sat down there for their simple breakfast.

While they were eating it, Nicolette was awakened by their talk, and by the song of the birds that were twittering in the branches.

She went to the shepherds, and spoke to the youngest of them and said:

"Pretty boy, may our Lady Mary take care of you!"

"May God bless you!" replied this young shepherd, whose speech came easier to him than to the others.

"Pretty boy," said Nicolette, "do you know Aucassin, the son of Count Garin, of Beaucaire?"

"Oh, yes! we know him."

"As you would have God bless you, pretty boy, tell him that there is a strange wild beast in this wood; and that he ought to come out to hunt for her; and that, if he takes her, he would not give one of her limbs—no, not for a hundred marks of gold, nor for five hundred marks, nor for all the gold that can be told."

As she said this, the shepherds were looking at Nicolette, and were wondering at her beauty.

"You speak false in saying this," said the shepherd who had his tongue more at command than the others had; "for there is not in all this forest a single lion, or boar, or stag, or any other brute, so rare that one of his limbs should be worth more than two deniers, or three at most. And you talk of such sums of money that no one will believe a word you say. You are a fairy, and no human creature. We do not want your company, and so go your way."

"Ah, pretty boy!" said Nicolette again, "do what I bid you in the name of God; for the creature of which I speak to you has such power that she can cure Aucassin of this trouble in which he is now. I have five sous in my purse; take them, and say to him that for three days he must come to hunt for this creature in this forest; that,

if he do not find her in three days at most, he will never be cured from his pain."

"By my faith!" said the young shepherd, "we will take your money. If Aucassin passes this way, we will tell him what you say; but we will not go to find him."

"God bless you!" said Nicolette. And so she bade the shepherds good-bye courteously.

[Now they sing it]

Nicolette of lovely face
Bade the shepherd boys good-day,
And through the forest took her way,
Till she came to a crossing-place,
Where seven roads met in the wood;
There, all alone, she thought it good
Her lover's love to try.

She gathers store of fleurs-de-lis
And thyme and brake,
And many leaves,
Her hut to make;
And from all these she weaves
The prettiest hut your eyes did ever see.

And then, by every saint above,
The pretty builder swore,
That, if her darling dear
Should never enter here,
She would not be his darling more,
Nor should he be her love.

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

Nicolette having thus made her little hut, and thatched it thickly on the inside and on the outside with fresh leaves and fragrant flowers, hid herself under a bush to see what Aucassin would do.

Now the rumour ran through all the country that Nicolette was lost. Some said she had escaped, and others said the Count Garin had killed her.

If everybody else had been sure of this, Aucassin would not have been. But of this he gave no sign. And his

father, well pleased to be rid of Nicolette, ordered that he should be released from prison, and bade all the knights and damsels of the country give fêtes for him, which might distract him.

The day when Nicolette disappeared, when the court of the count was crowded with knights and ladies, Aucassin was leaning against a pillar, all dejected, and out of his senses with sorrow, and only thinking of her he loved.

A knight who saw how melancholy he was came to him and said:

"Aucassin, I have been sick of the same disease as you, so that I know how to give you good advice, if you will only hear me."

"Thank you, sir!" said Aucassin; "for indeed I am greatly in need of good advice and cure."

Then the knight said: "Mount your horse, and go into the woods yonder. The sight of the plains, the sweet odour of the plants, and the songs of the little birds will all comfort you, believe me."

"Thank you, indeed, sir!" said Aucassin. "I will gladly do so."

So he went out from the hall at once, and went down the steps, hurried to the stable, and put saddle and bridle on one of his horses, which was waiting there. He put his foot in the stirrup, sprang upon the noble beast, and rode out from the castle walls. Once outside, he remembered the advice which the knight had given to him, and went straight to the woods. Here he soon met the shepherds seated on the grass around the spring, eating their bread with great joy; for it was now noon.

[*Now they sing it*]

All the shepherd-boys had met,
Esmeret and Martinet,
Johannot and Fruclinet,
Aubuget and Robecon.

By the spring they sat; and one
 With the sweetest voice began:
 "God bless Master Aucassin,
 And the girl so fair and bright,
 With teeth so white, and eyes so gray,
 Who to us this blessed day
 The money brought,
 With which we bought
 Cakes to eat, and pipes to play,
 Flutes and horns and whittles good,
 And heavy mauls to cleave the wood.
 May God cure him!
 May God cure her!
 This is what I say."

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

When Aucassin heard the shepherds singing this, he thought in a moment that his sweetheart Nicolette, his well-beloved, had passed that way. To make sure of this, he hastened to them.

"God bless you, my fine boys!" he cried.

"God care for you!" replied he whose speech came easiest to him.

"My good boys," said Aucassin, "sing me the song again which you were singing just now."

"No, my fine lord, we will not sing it again; and cursed be he who shall sing it to you!"

"My fine fellows, do you not know me?"

"We know you very well, sir: we know that you are Aucassin, our young gentleman. But we are not your men; we are the count's men."

"I beg you to do what I ask you."

"Why should I sing for you if I do not choose to sing? It is very true that the Count of Garin is the richest man in all this country; but if he found one of my oxen or cows or sheep in his grazing lands or in his grain, he would make their eyes fly out. Why should I sing for you, then, if I choose to hold my tongue?"

"May God bless you, my boys!" said Aucassin again.

"See, here are ten sols which I have found in my pocket. Take them, and sing to me again the song I heard you sing just now."

"Sir," said the shepherd, "I will take your money; but I will not sing to you, because I have sworn that I will not. I will do what I can; and I will tell it to you, if you please."

"Pardieu!" cried Aucassin, "I had rather hear your story than hear nothing."

"Sir," said the shepherd again, "we were sitting here by the spring, just as we are now. It was between the first hour and the third hour. We were eating our bread here, when there came up a girl who was the most beautiful creature in the world, so that we thought she was a fairy; for the whole wood was lighted up by her."

"She gave us so much of her money that we promised her that, if you passed by here, we would tell you that you must go and hunt in the forest; and that there was such a creature that, if you caught her, you would not sell one of her joints—no, not for five hundred marks of silver—and also that you would be cured of your disease. She also said that if you did not catch this creature before three days had passed you would never see her. Go to the hunt, then, if you please, or do not go to the hunt, if you do not please: as to that, I have nothing to do. I have told my message."

"You have said quite enough, my boys," replied Aucassin. "God grant that I may meet her!"

[Now they sing it]

Aucassin most gladly heard
Every sweet and loving word
Of his darling of the charming face:
In his heart they pierced him so,
That he left the shepherds good,
And plunged into the deepest wood,
Where'er his horse might choose to go.

“ O Nicolette, my sweet! ”
He sighed as sadly as before,
“ It is you I hope to meet:
I do not hunt nor deer or boar.
In this forest black
It is you I track,
That I this blessed day
Your pretty smile may greet,
May see your pretty eyes of gray;
See you, my darling sweet!
For oh! the Almighty I implore
That I may see your face once more,
My dear! ”

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

Aucassin wandered here and there in the forest, just as his horse might carry him. Do not think that the brambles and briers spared him. I can tell you that they tore his clothes so that he had hardly a rag left upon him. And the blood ran down his arms, his sides, and his legs, in thirty or forty different places; so that you might have tracked him in the wood by the red drops which he left on the grass wherever he went. But Aucassin was all the time thinking of his darling sweetheart Nicolette, so that he did not once feel any pain.

So he travelled through the forest all day long, without gaining any news of his beautiful sweetheart; and, when he saw the night coming on, he began to weep bitterly.

As he was riding along through an old path, where the bushes had grown up thick and high, he saw before him, right in the middle of the road, a man whom I will describe to you.

He was large, and marvellously ugly. His face was blacker than broiled meat, and it was so large that there was a palm breadth between his two eyes. His cheeks were enormous; and so were his nostrils and his nose, which was flat; his lips were big, and redder than coals; and he had frightful great yellow teeth. He had on sandals

of leather, and greaves of leather, which were tied with thongs up to his knees. He was covered with a great double cloak, and was resting on a heavy club.

Aucassin was frightened, and said to him, "Good brother, may God help you!"

"God bless you!" replied the other.

"What are you doing there?" said Aucassin.

"What affair is that of yours?"

"I only ask with good will."

"Well, why are you mourning and weeping so? If I were as rich a man as you are, I am sure nothing in the world would make me weep."

"How do you know me, then?"

"I know that you are Aucassin, the son of the count; and, if you will tell me why you weep, I will tell you why I am here."

"I am very glad to tell you. I came out to hunt this morning. I had a white harrier, the prettiest dog in the whole world, and I have lost him. That is the reason why I am weeping."

"What! For a miserable dog will you use the tears in your eyes or the heart in your breast? You are a poor creature to be weeping so—and you the richest man in the country! If your father wanted fifteen or twenty white harriers, he could have them in a minute. Now I am in sorrow for something real."

"What is that?"

"I am going to tell you, sir. I was hired by a rich farmer here to drive his cart, which was drawn by four oxen. It is three days since I lost the red ox, which was the finest of the four. I went here, and I went there; I left my wagon, and sought everywhere for the beast, but I could not find him. It is three days since I ate anything or drank anything; and here I stray about, for I

do not dare go into the town. They would put me in prison, for I have nothing to pay with. All my wealth is what you see upon my body. I have a mother. She, poor woman, was not richer than I. All she had was an old petticoat to cover her poor old body; and they pulled that off her back, and now she is lying in the straw. That troubles me more than my condition. For money comes and goes. If I lose to-day, I will gain to-morrow; and, when I can pay for the ox, I will. I will never shed a tear for such a trifle as that. And here are you crying for a lost dog! You are a poor creature!"

"Certes, my good fellow, you are a good comforter," said Aucassin. "May God bless you! Tell me, how much was the red ox worth?"

"They charge me twenty sols for him, sir; nor can I beat them down a doit."

"Here are twenty sols which I have in my purse; take them, and pay for your ox."

"Thank you, indeed, sir!" said the man, "and may God send you that you are looking for!" So saying, he took leave, and Aucassin went on upon his way.

The night was fine and clear. Aucassin rode and rode for a long time; and after he had passed from one road to another, and from one path to another, he came at last to Nicolette's little lodge.

Inside and outside, before and behind, it had flowers marvellous sweet and lovely to the eye. A ray of moonlight lighted it up, so that Aucassin saw the pretty lodge, and stopped in a minute.

"Ah!" said he, "nobody but my darling Nicolette made this bower, and she has made it with her own pretty hands. For her sake and in memory of her I will dismount now, and I will spend the night here."

So saying, he took his foot from the stirrup, that he

might dismount. But alas! he was thinking of nothing but Nicolette, and was taking no care of himself. Besides, his horse was large and was high; and so it happened that he fell upon a stone, and fell so hard that he put his shoulder out of joint.

All wounded as he was, still he was able to fasten the horse to a tree with his other arm. Then he went back to the lodge, and entered it, and lay upon his back, and looked up at the blue sky and the golden stars through a hole in the roof of his fragrant retreat. As he lay and looked, he saw one star brighter than all the others. Then, with a sigh, he began to sing.

[Now they sing it]

Star of light, which I behold
 With the Queen of Light,
 Nicolette of locks of gold
 Is with thee to-night.
 Oh! if I were there in bliss
 In thy still home above,
 How gladly would I pet and kiss
 My sweetest love!

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

When Nicolette heard Aucassin, she ran to him, for she was not far off. She entered the lodge, and threw her beautiful arms around his neck, kissed him, and embraced him most tenderly.

“Well found, dear sweet friend!” said she.

“And you, my darling, you are well found!” and so they kissed again and again with infinite joy.

“O my darling,” said Aucassin, “my shoulder is sadly wounded. But, now I am with you, I know no pain nor grief.”

Nicolette, when she heard this, felt of the place, and found, indeed, that the shoulder was out of joint. Then she tore a piece of linen, and placed in it a tuft of flowers

and fresh herbs, and placed it on the sick place; and so she tended it and bandaged it with her white hands, that, with the aid of God, who cares for lovers, she cured him.

"Aucassin, my darling," said she, "what will you do now? If your father searches this wood to-morrow, he will find us. I do not know what will happen to you; but for me, I know I shall be killed."

"That is true, my darling," said Aucassin; "and that would be great grief to me: but, as long as I can, I will defend you and save you."

So saying, he mounted his horse, and took his sweetheart before him, kissing her and embracing her; and so they rode across the country.

[Now they sing it]

Aucassin, the handsome boy,
Glad with love and quick with joy,
Leaves this bower of their rest;
Nicolette he fondly prest
In his arms upon his breast;
He folded fast his pretty prize,
Kissed her lips, and kissed her eyes,
Kissed her lovely face all over—
Laughing boy and happy lover.

But all this must not last.

"Dear Aucassin,"
The girl began,
"To what country shall we go?"
"Dear child," said he, "how should I know?
Little, dearest, do I care,
How we go, or when, or where—
In this wood, or far away,
If from you I do not stray."
Then mountains high they passed,
Passed through many lands,
Till to the sea they found their way,
And stood upon the sands
By the shore.

[Now they speak it, and talk it, and tell it]

Aucassin and his darling then dismounted. He took his horse by the bridle, and her by the hand, and so they

walked along the beach. By and by they saw some sailors, and made signals to them; and the men landed, and agreed to take them back with them to the ship.

As soon as they were at sea a terrible storm arose, so wonderful that it hurled them along from one country to another, till they came to a harbour at the Castle of Torelore.¹ They asked what country it was, and were told it was the country of the King of Torelore. Then Aucassin asked if he were at war; and they said he was, and that it was a very cruel war. Then he thanked the sailors, and took leave of them, mounted his horse, with Nicolette before him, and so rode toward the castle.

"Where is the king?" said he.

"He is in bed," they said.

"And where is his wife?" said Aucassin.

"She is in the army, where she leads all the people of the country."

When Aucassin heard this, he was very much amazed. He went to the palace, dismounted with Nicolette, begged her to hold his horse, and, with his sword at his side, went to the king's chamber. There he pulled the clothes off the bed, and threw them into the middle of the room. Then he seized a stick, and beat the king so heartily that you would have thought he would kill him.

"Oh, oh, oh! my dear sir," cried the king. "What are you doing with me? Are you crazy, to beat a man so in his own house?"

"By the heart of God!" replied Aucassin, "I will kill

¹ Torelore, or Turelure, so called, it is said, from the singularities of the people. Now, Turelure is the refrain of an old French song, which means, "always the same," as we might say, "So, so, so, so, so." The place is Aigues Mortes, known to tourists, but now five or six miles from the sea. Aigues Mortes was originally Aquæ Mortuæ, the name of a landlocked seaport.—E. E. H.

you, misbegotten dog, if you do not swear that no man in this country shall ever lie in bed as you do."

The king took the oath; and Aucassin then said, "Now take me to the army, where your wife is."

"With pleasure," said the king.

Both went down to the court. The king mounted a horse, Aucassin mounted his own; Nicolette took refuge in the queen's chamber; and both the men went to the army. When they arrived, the battle was in all its fury. The battle was fought with wild apples, eggs, and green cheeses.

[Now they sing it]

Aucassin, of noble blood,
By the battling armies stood,
And wondered at the sight;
For men-at-arms were seen
Keeping up the fight:
With eggs they threw, with all their might,
Apples raw and cheeses green!
And the soldier who with these
Most disturbed the fountain bright,
He was deemed the bravest knight.
Aucassin, of noble blood,
Watched this battle where he stood,
And laughed outright.

[Now they tell it, and speak it, and talk it]

Aucassin went to the king, and said to him, "Are these your enemies, sir?"

"Yes," replied the king.

"Do you wish to have me avenge you?"

"Indeed I do!"

Then Aucassin drew his sword, plunged into the thick of the fight, and cut and thrust from right to left; so that in almost no time he had killed a great number.

"My dear sir," cried the king, seizing Aucassin's horse by the bridle, "do not kill them in this way!"

"How else can I avenge you?" said Aucassin.

"Sir, you do too much. It is not our custom to kill

each other in this fashion: all that we do is to put the enemy to flight."

Then they returned to the Castle of Torelore, where the people of the country advised the king to drive Aucassin out of his land, and to keep this pretty girl Nicolette for his wife, for she seemed to them a lady of high degree.

When Nicolette heard this, she was sorely grieved, and said:

[Now they sing it]

"Sire, King of Torelore,
Puissant prince and lord of glory,"
Said the pretty Nicolette,
"You think me like a fool in story:
I am not one yet.
Aucassin shall I forget,
Who loves me as his own?
Not all your shows and dances proud,
Not all your harps and viols loud,
Are worth my dear alone."

[Now they tell it, and speak it, and talk it]

Aucassin and his darling Nicolette took great delight and ease in the Castle of Torelore.

While they were there some Saracens came up by sea, who assailed the castle and took it by storm. As soon as they had taken it, they carried off the people prisoners. They put Nicolette into one ship, and Aucassin into another, tied hand and foot. Then they set sail again.

As they sailed, a violent storm arose, and the ships were separated from each other. The ship in which Aucassin was was thrown so far at the mercy of the waves that at last she came to the Castle of Beaucaire.

The people of that country ran to the harbour; and when they recognised Aucassin they were very happy, for he had been away for three years, and his father and mother were dead. They took him in triumph to the Castle of Beaucaire, and acknowledged him as their lord and master

in place of the Count Garin. He took possession of his lands in peace.

[Now they sing it]

Aucassin did repair
To his town of Beaucaire,
And well-governed kingdom and city.
How glad would he be,
If he only could see
His own Nicolette so pretty!

"Dear child of sweet face,
How I wish that I knew
To what sort of place
I must go to find you!
There is no land or sea
God has made here below,
Where to look after thee
I would not gladly go."

[Now they tell it, they speak it, and talk it]

We will leave Aucassin there, that we may tell about Nicolette.

The ship on which she had been taken away was that of the King of Carthage and his twelve brothers, who were princes and kings like himself. When they saw how beautiful Nicolette was, they did her great honour, and asked who she was, for she seemed to them a noble lady of high degree. But she could give them no account of herself, having been carried from home when she was a very little girl.

Soon they came to Carthage. As soon as they saw the walls of the castle, and all the country round about, Nicolette recollected that it was here that she had been nursed, and had grown up, and that it was here where she had been taken as a slave; for she had not been so young but she remembered perfectly well that she had been daughter of the King of Carthage.

[Now they sing it]

The wise Nicolette
Walks up on the shores,
And she does not forget

The castles and towers.
 At first, the grand sight
 Filled the child with delight,
 Then she sighed: "Well-a-day!
 What would Aucassin say,
 My own darling knight,
 If he knew that the pirates, that terrible day,
 The Princess of Carthage had carried away?"

"Dear boy, thy heart's love
 Brings me sorrow and pain;
 May the good God above
 Let me see thee again!
 Come, fold me in thine own embrace,
 Kiss my lips, and kiss my eyes,
 Kiss again your sweetheart's face!"
 So his princess sadly cries
 To her lord and lover.

When Nicolette sang this, the King of Carthage heard her.

"My dear child," he cried, throwing his arms around her neck, "tell me who you are, I beg you! Do not be afraid of me."

"Sir," replied Nicolette, "I am the daughter of the King of Carthage, from whom I was stolen fifteen years ago."

It was easy for the king and his brothers to see that what Nicolette said was true. So they took her to the palace, and made a great fête for her, as was fitting for the daughter of a king. They wished to give her for a wife to a king of the pagans, but she refused. She said she did not yet wish to marry.

After three or four days, she thought of the way by which she could gain some news of Aucassin. The only way she could think of was to learn to play the violin; and one day, when they wanted to marry her to a rich pagan prince, she ran away, and came to the harbour, where she lodged with a poor old woman who lived there. Then she took a certain herb, and squeezed the juice out of it;

and with this juice she stained her pretty face from top to bottom, so that all of a sudden it became quite black. Then she made herself a tunic, a mantle, shirt, and breeches, and so disguised herself as a minstrel; took her violin, and went to a sailor, who, with some hesitation, agreed to take her into his ship.

The sails were already set; and so swiftly did the ship sail here and there through the high sea that she arrived at the country of Provence; and there Nicolette landed with her violin. Once on land, the gentle girl began wandering through the country, playing her violin as she went from this place to that, until she came to the Castle of Beaucaire, where was Aucassin.

[Now they sing it]

Aucassin is sitting there
At his castle at Beaucaire;
All his barons brave surround him,
Sweet the flowers and birds around him:
But he is in despair.

For Aucassin can not forget
His charming Nicolette,
His darling fair.
While he sighs, the girl has found him;
For she stands upon the stair,
Deftly tunes her viol-strings,
And to the prince and barons sings:

“Wise and loyal knights,
Hear my little lay:
How Nicolette and Aucassin were kept so far apart,
While he loved her, as she loved him, with all his heart,
As you do not love every day.

“One day the pagans made her slave
In the tower of Torelore.
Where was Aucassin the brave?
I do not know his story.
But Nicolette, of whom I sing,
Is in Carthage bound,
Where she has her father found,
And where he reigns as king.

He would give the maiden over
To wed in pomp a pagan lover.
But Nicolette says, No!
She loves a damoiseau,
Named Aucassin, and so
She will wed no pagan hound,
She waits alone till she has found
Him whom she loves."

[Now they tell it, and speak it, and talk it]

When Aucassin heard Nicolette sing this, he was full of joy. He led her on one side, and said:

"My good fellow, do you know anything more of this Nicolette, whose story you have been singing to us?"

"Yes, sir: I know that she is the most constant and the wisest creature that ever was born, as well as the most beautiful. She is the daughter of the King of Carthage, from whom she was stolen in her childhood; and he, in turn, took her and Aucassin from the Castle of Torelore. Glad was he, indeed, to find her; and now he wants to marry her to one of the mightiest kings of Spain. But Nicolette would rather be hanged and burned than consent to be the wife of any but Aucassin, though she were asked to wed the most powerful and the richest prince in the earth."

"My good fellow," cried Aucassin, "if you could only return to the country where Nicolette now is, and tell her that I beg her to come here to speak to me, I would gladly give you all you could ask, or all you could take of what I have. For love of her, I shall take no other wife, of how-ever high degree; for I shall never have any except her, whom here I wait for, and whom I should have gone to seek had I only known where to find her."

"Sir, if you have thus determined, I will go and seek Nicolette, for your sake and for her sake, for I love her truly."

Then Aucassin swore that this was his dearest thought and wish, and he gave to the minstrel twenty livres.

As the minstrel turned away, she saw that he was weeping, so strong was his passion.

So she turned on her steps and said: "Do not be distressed, sir. I promise you I will bring her before long."

Aucassin thanked her; and Nicolette at once withdrew, and went to the house of the viscountess, the wife of the viscount, her godfather. He was dead. At this house Nicolette lodged: she made a confidante of his widow, and told her the whole story.

Her mistress recognised her readily as being the Nicolette whom she had educated. She bade her wash herself and bathe, and rest for a week. Then she anointed her face with the juice of a certain herb she knew; and she did this so often and so well that Nicolette again became as beautiful as ever.

When all this was done, Nicolette dressed herself in rich robes of silk, of which the lady had ample provision. Then she seated herself upon a sofa of the same stuff, and sent her hostess to seek her friend.

The viscountess came to the palace, where she found Aucassin, who was weeping and wailing for his darling Nicolette, who was too long in coming, as he said.

"Aucassin," said the lady to him, "do not lament any longer, but come with me. I will show you the thing which you love best in all the world; that is Nicolette, your sweetheart dear, who has come from distant lands to join you again."

Aucassin was very happy.

[Now they sing it]

When Aucassin has heard
This lady's welcome word,
That the girl of lovely face,
His sweetheart dear, had come

To that place,
He comes as quick as wind
With this lady who could find
Her in her home.

He comes into the room
Where his darling has her seat.
When she sees the boy appear,
Quickly to his arms she flies
To kiss his lips, and kiss his eyes,
Her only love, her only dear,
And give him welcome sweet.

So the evening sped away;
And on the morning of another day
She was espoused to him there,
And so became the Lady of Beaucaire.
To both long days of pleasure came—
Pleasure that was aye the same;
Nicolette, the happy she,
And Aucassin, the happy he.

And here will end my little lay,
Because I've nothing more to say.

END OF NICOLETTE AND AUCASSIN

PAUL AND VIRGINIA

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Paul and Virginia

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With a Critical and Biographical Introduction
by Andrew Lang

Illustrated



New York
D. Appleton and Company
1899

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PAUL AND VIRGINIA

IN an interesting letter of Lady Louisa Stuart's she asks Scott how he accounts for a certain phenomenon in taste. Quite young people, almost children, turn with indifference or dislike from the book which was the joy of their grandparents. It is now out of fashion, but the young readers know nothing about that: they seem to be swayed merely by the Zeit-geist, the intangible, invisible, inaudible spirit which controls a generation.

Lady Louisa Stuart, who died in 1851, and who may have remembered the last attempt of a Stuart prince to invade England, about 1761, had known generations enough. The youth of George III, with its promise, the novels of Fanny Burney, the celebrity of Dr. Johnson, the American Revolution, the age of the *philosophes* and *Encyclopédistes*; the Reign of Terror, the empire of Napoleon, Waterloo, the revival of romance, the period of Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats; the Reform bill, the Corn laws, the emancipation of the negroes in English colonies, the best years of Tennyson and Browning, of Poe and Hawthorne—not to mention two or three minor French revolutions—all these changes in politics and literature she had beheld with intelligent eyes. In her youth Rousseau had been everything: her world had wept and fevered with "La Nouvelle Héloïse" and with Werther, the offspring of that heroine. She remembered the vogue of Richardson, and she lived to know a generation

which laughed, while she shared the merriment, at Pamela and Sir Charles Grandison. She came to be acquainted with girls whom "La Nouvelle Héloïse" bored and did not corrupt. Why was it, she asked Scott, and why, in these cases, did the grandchildren naturally reject what had pleased the grandparents?

In reading the celebrated story of "Paul and Virginia," we are reminded of these instinctive changes of taste. Just before the French Revolution, even children spontaneously and unaffectedly wept over the sorrows of Virginia, while the book was the favourite with Napoleon and his consolation in exile. Yet my own very bookish infancy found no pleasure in the volume, with its pretty, delicate, Stoddart-like designs of Paul and Virginia sheltered by an umbrella of foliage; of Virginia's corpse on the seashore, her fair hand still clinging to her clothes, "the roses of life and the violets of death mingled" (as we learn) on her dank cheeks. The situation of Virginia declining to be saved without her petticoats has long moved the smile. The narrative failed to interest me as Shakespeare or the "Arabian Nights" or "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" did interest and absorb a child of six. In fact, the Zeit-geist had altered: there was a new Zeit-geist, which knew Hotspur and the Fat Knight, Ali Baba and William of Deloraine, but knew not Paul and Virginia. In truth, this celebrated book was the fruit, not of what is permanent in universal and eternal human nature, but of a moment in human nature, the moment of sentimental reaction from the contented common sense of the age of Anne and of Louis XV, the age when a sceptical, polished, urban society dominated literature. The reaction took the form of belief in "Nature"—untutored Nature—"natural religion," the noble savage, everything that was at the opposite pole from modern society and modern education. Paul and

Virginia are, what we ought all to be, children of Nature, virtuous, happy, religious without orthodoxy, browsing innocently on "the fruit which the boon earth bears." They are such persons as Greece assigned to the golden age, as Virgil also dreamed of, in years of the snakeless meadow and the unsailed sea. Civilization, society, the ideas of Europe, touch Paul and Virginia only to destroy them, to wreck their peace, to make Virginia cling to her clothes. These are the ideas of Rousseau and of Mr. James Boswell, the younger, of Auchinleck; the ideas, too, of Mr. Squeers: "Oh, how blessed to be in a state of Nature!" But these doctrines were, in their prime, opposed by Dr. Johnson, and, on the whole, with all their attractiveness, the ideas have not worn well. Of "Paul and Virginia," the moral, in its fulness, has perished; only the few pretty idyllic scenes remain; the philosophy of the hoary sage, the narrator, is entirely out of vogue. Yet the ideas of the sage are not extinct except as far as mere form goes; they survive, much metamorphosed, in the socialistic ideal of William Morris's "News from Nowhere," in Mr. Ruskin's works, and in several Utopias. Indeed, while civilization lasts, the ideas of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre must keep recurring; mankind, anxious to eat its cake and have it, will necessarily long for some combination of the picturesque and kindly aspects of savage life with the relative security and large resources of civilization. Daily does civilization make existence uglier and harsher; all of us who have any sentiment long for Saint-Pierre's ideal island, for "climate and the affections." Thus Mr. Stevenson took refuge in Samoa: the last practical disciple of Saint-Pierre, and, if one may say so, the first cultivated beachcomber. As we have said, Virgil, and before him the Alexandrian poets, had similar emotions of reaction from cities and civilized life. But they remained rooted in Rome or Alexandria,

dining out and talking literary and critical gossip. Saint-Pierre himself did not linger long in any of the isles and states of his fancy; he came back to Paris and did his best to get places and pensions. Fame and offers of marriage from young ladies of beauty and virtue he did acquire. That island Paradise of Nature and Happiness he never won; and now the very fame is fleeting, and the peculiar style of sentiment is out of vogue. Saint-Pierre marks a stage on the road of the evolution toward Ruskinism; he supplied the shelter of an inn on the route, he did not build the terminus of the journey. Men naturally, in most generations, think they have reached a terminus. Saint-Pierre thought he had found it with his Nature, Virtue, Happiness, Benevolent Providence. But, to work out his ideas, he was obliged to live in a corner, shutting his ears to the shrieks of the Reign of Terror, hiding his head from the sight of the guillotine. To these horrors had the return to Nature and the search for Happiness and Virtue brought the fair land of France.

Our author was born in Havre, in 1737, of a family with futile aspirations to *noblesse* and unsatisfied desires for places and privileges. He had a friend, an elderly, poor scion of nobility, who, among other kindnesses, gave him "Robinson Crusoe." The book's influence may be detected all through the career of Saint-Pierre: an island; an island to govern; an isle of the virtuous, happy, and natural—that was his dream. In Sancho Panza's place he would have been triumphant. Like De Quincey and his brother, like Sir James Mackintosh, the boy lived a life apart in his island dream, and gave his little senate laws. These seem to be common exercises of fancy among children, but the peculiarity of Saint-Pierre was to prolong the vision through all his life. When a lad he went voyaging to Martinique, looking, like the companions of St. Columba,

for an eligible insular place of retreat. *They* found several such desert islands in the Hebrides, but Saint-Pierre came too late into an overpopulated world. He had a friend who was a Capuchin; with him he roamed through hospitable country places, and yearned himself to be a "barefooted friar." In this he did not persist—indeed, he was educated as a civil engineer. He was difficult to live with; he quarrelled with his comrades and chiefs. An idea occurred to him: he wandered to Russia, desiring to establish a happy little commonwealth on the shores of the Aral Sea, of all places. Always, like pilgrims of an elder world, he found patrons, protectors, who fed and sheltered him—nay, was introduced to the Czarina. The last century had these hospitalities. People of birth, even kings and emperors, were friendly to genius, were accessible, were ready to run a few risks of disappointment, if they might perchance harbour angels unawares. The Revolution, somehow, has actually intensified class distinctions; the *noblesse* welcomes no new men if they are not millionaires, and royalty does not make experiments in the cultivation of genius. Except Daniel Home, the celebrated medium, I remember no lowly-born wanderer who has been caressed at courts; not, of course, at the court of England. The lines of Saint-Pierre were cast in pleasanter places. At Warsaw he found a princess to lay her heart at his feet. The circumstances are variously reported, but certainly the lady, "remarked for her love of virtue," was even more remarkable for her love of the strolling philosopher.

Returning to France, he found his family broken up and his father dead. He began a system of inflicting on officials amateur papers about all manner of schemes, social and political. They sent him to Madagascar, but *en route* he found that he was to be mixed up with the slave trade. On reaching the Isle of France he deserted

his companions, and devoted himself to gloomy meditations and careful observations of Nature. Here he was an innovator; he did not generalize his landscape, but examined minutely, and filled volumes with manuscript notes. The papers still exist, and prove the author's originality in this field, since so assiduously laboured, especially by Mr. Richard Jefferies. He returned to Paris in 1771, wrote a book full of his observations—"Voyage à l'Ile de France"—and met, quarrelled with, and finally lived in much intimacy with Rousseau. Difficult himself in intercourse, Saint-Pierre had patience enough to endure Rousseau's incalculable moods—his alternating effusion, churlishness, and suspicion. By this time the unhappy man had broken with Hume—the quarrel is sonorous yet—and had slipped out of the friendship of the Earl Marischal. But Saint-Pierre found him "full of matter," as Jacques says, and especially fluent and instructive on every sort of subject, when they had wandered beyond Paris into the fields now built over. When they regained the streets, Rousseau relapsed into his misanthropy. Saint-Pierre, in reaction against atheism, was developing his philosophy of benevolent design in the universe. Why, he asks, do fleas exist? That the rich may employ the poor as housemaids to keep down the noxious insects. Elderly people remember teleological arguments of this kind in serious books for the young. I suppose that Mr. Darwin had some other theory of fleas. But, as our author frankly remarks of Paul and Virginia, "their theology, like that of Nature, lay all in sentiment." We are more apt to see "Nature red in tooth and claw with rapine," like the Friends of Man in 1793. Saint-Pierre, just ten years before that scarlet date, became famous for "justifying the ways of God to man" in his "Études de la Nature." The book is a collection of arguments like his theory of fleas,

but it was enormously successful. We are naturally good, but society makes us bad. Why the society of the naturally virtuous should be radically mischievous, does not appear. Man is, first, "barbarous," then in "the state of Nature" (which is blessed), lastly in the state of corruption—our present condition. Escaping barbarism, Paul and Virginia were in the state of Nature—happy and virtuous—till Corruption stepped forth, veiled in the form of a rich aunt. My own researches lead me to differ with our author. Man is first savage, and in low savagery really does display certain unselfish virtues, a kind of prehistoric socialism tempered by tribal feuds and cruel and lustful laws and rites. Advancing to barbarism, he becomes more selfish, more cruel, and more addicted to malevolent religion and human sacrifice. Reaching civilization, man has occasionally the grace to be ashamed of himself, and then, admiring the "good old ancestral virtues" of savagery (as Mr. Howitt writes about the Australian blacks), man conceives the dream of a "return to Nature," happiness, and moral excellence.

The sage expounds Saint-Pierre's ideas in dialogue with Paul. They procured fame for their author, and the older he grew the younger were the brides whom he married. His second wedding, at sixty-three, with a maiden of seventeen, was a very happy union. He vegetated through the Reign of Terror; later he defended the existence of a Deity before the Institute (he became a member of the Academy in 1803); he quarrelled with the learned; he was patronized by Napoleon; and he died, at the age of seventy-seven, on January 21, 1814. Of all his works, only "Paul and Virginia" survives, rescued by the charm of its idyllic scenes and by the passion of Virginia.

ANDREW LANG.

ILLUSTRATIONS

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PAUL AND VIRGINIA

SITUATED on the eastern side of the mountain that rises above Port Louis, in the Mauritius, upon a piece of land bearing the marks of former cultivation, are seen the ruins of two small cottages. These ruins are not far from the centre of a valley formed by immense rocks, which opens only toward the north. On the left rises the mountain called the Height of Discovery, whence the eye marks the distant sail when it first touches the verge of the horizon, and whence the signal is given when a vessel approaches the island. At the foot of this mountain stands the town of Port Louis. On the right is formed the road which stretches from Port Louis to the Shaddock Grove, where the church bearing that name lifts its head, surrounded by its avenues of bamboo, in the middle of a spacious plain and the prospect terminates in a forest extending to the farthest bounds of the island. The front view presents the bay, denominated the Bay of the Tomb: a little on the right is seen the Cape of Misfortune; and beyond rolls the expanded ocean, on the surface of which appear a few uninhabited islands; and, among others, the Point of Endeavour, which resembles a bastion built upon the flood.

At the entrance of the valley which presents these various objects, the echoes of the mountain incessantly repeat the hollow murmurs of the winds that shake the neigh-

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bouring forests, and the tumultuous dashing of the waves which break at a distance upon the cliffs; but near the ruined cottages all is calm and still, and the only objects which there meet the eye are rude steep rocks, that rise like a surrounding rampart. Large clumps of trees grow at their base, on their rifted sides, and even on their majestic tops, where the clouds seem to repose. The showers, which their bold points attract, often paint the vivid colours of the rainbow on their green and brown declivities, and swell the sources of the little river which flows at their feet, called the river of Fan-Palms. Within this inclosure reigns the most profound silence. The waters, the air, all the elements, are at peace. Scarcely does the echo repeat the whispers of the palm-trees, spreading their broad leaves, the long points of which are gently agitated by the winds. A soft light illumines the bottom of this deep valley, on which the sun shines only at noon. But, even at break of day, the rays of light are thrown on the surrounding rocks; and their sharp peaks, rising above the shadows of the mountain, appear like tints of gold and purple gleaming upon the azure sky.

To this scene I loved to resort, as I could here enjoy at once the richness of an unbounded landscape, and the charm of uninterrupted solitude. One day, when I was seated at the foot of the cottages, and contemplating their ruins, a man, advanced in years, passed near the spot. He was dressed in the ancient garb of the island, his feet were bare, and he leaned upon a staff of ebony: his hair was white, and the expression of his countenance was dignified and interesting. I bowed to him with respect; he returned the salutation; and, after looking at me with some earnestness, came and placed himself upon the hillock on which I was seated. Encouraged by this mark of con-

fidence, I thus addressed him: "Father, can you tell me to whom those cottages once belonged?"—"My son," replied the old man, "those heaps of rubbish, and that untilled land, were, twenty years ago, the property of two families, who then found happiness in this solitude. Their history is affecting; but what European, pursuing his way to the Indies, will pause one moment to interest himself in the fate of a few obscure individuals? What European can picture happiness to his imagination amid poverty and neglect? The curiosity of mankind is only attracted by the history of the great, and yet from that knowledge little use can be derived."—"Father," I rejoined, "from your manner and your observations, I perceive that you have acquired much experience of human life. If you have leisure, relate to me, I beseech you, the history of the ancient inhabitants of this desert; and be assured that even the men who are most perverted by the prejudices of the world find a soothing pleasure in contemplating that happiness which belongs to simplicity and virtue." The old man, after a short silence, during which he leaned his face upon his hands, as if he were trying to recall the images of the past, thus began his narration:

Monsieur de la Tour, a young man, who was a native of Normandy, after having in vain solicited a commission in the French army, or some support from his own family, at length determined to seek his fortune in this island, where he arrived in 1726. He brought hither a young woman, whom he loved tenderly, and by whom he was no less tenderly beloved. She belonged to a rich and ancient family of the same province; but he had married her secretly and without fortune, and in opposition to the will of her relations, who refused their consent because he was found guilty of being descended from parents who had no claims to nobility. Monsieur de la Tour, leaving

his wife at Port Louis, embarked for Madagascar, in order to purchase a few slaves to assist him in forming a plantation in this island. He landed at Madagascar during that unhealthy season which commences about the middle of October; and soon after his arrival died of the pestilential fever, which prevails in that island six months of the year, and which will forever baffle the attempts of the European nations to form establishments on that fatal soil. His effects were seized upon by the rapacity of strangers, as commonly happens to persons dying in foreign parts; and his wife, who was pregnant, found herself a widow in a country where she had neither credit nor acquaintance, and no earthly possession, or rather support, but one negro woman. Too delicate to solicit protection or relief from any one else after the death of him whom alone she loved, misfortune armed her with courage, and she resolved to cultivate, with her slave, a little spot of ground, and procure for herself the means of subsistence.

Desert as was the island, and the ground left to the choice of the settler, she avoided those spots which were most fertile and most favourable to commerce: seeking some nook of the mountain, some secret asylum where she might live solitary and unknown, she bent her way from the town toward these rocks, where she might conceal herself from observation. All sensitive and suffering creatures, from a sort of common instinct, fly for refuge amid their pains to haunts the most wild and desolate; as if rocks could form a rampart against misfortune—as if the calm of Nature could hush the tumults of the soul. That Providence, which lends its support when we ask but the supply of our necessary wants, had a blessing in reserve for Madame de la Tour, which neither riches nor greatness can purchase—this blessing was a friend.

The spot to which Madame de la Tour fled had already

been inhabited for a year by a young woman of a lively, good-natured, and affectionate disposition. Margaret (for that was her name) was born in Brittany, of a family of peasants, by whom she was cherished and beloved, and with whom she might have passed through life in simple rustic happiness if, misled by the weakness of a tender heart, she had not listened to the passion of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who promised her marriage. He soon abandoned her, and, adding inhumanity to seduction, refused to insure a provision for the child of which she was pregnant. Margaret then determined to leave forever her native village, and retire, where her fault might be concealed, to some colony distant from that country where she had lost the only portion of a poor peasant-girl—her reputation. With some borrowed money she purchased an old negro slave, with whom she cultivated a little corner of this district.

Madame de la Tour, followed by her negro woman, came to this spot, where she found Margaret engaged in suckling her child. Soothed and charmed by the sight of a person in a situation somewhat similar to her own, Madame de la Tour related, in a few words, her past condition and her present wants. Margaret was deeply affected by the recital; and, more anxious to merit confidence than to create esteem, she confessed, without disguise, the errors of which she had been guilty. "As for me," said she, "I deserve my fate; but you, madam!—you! at once virtuous and unhappy"—and, sobbing, she offered Madame de la Tour both her hut and her friendship. That lady, affected by this tender reception, pressed her in her arms, and exclaimed: "Ah! surely Heaven has put an end to my misfortunes, since it inspires you, to whom I am a stranger, with more goodness toward me than I have ever experienced from my own relations!"

I was acquainted with Margaret; and, although my habitation is a league and a half distant, in the woods behind that sloping mountain, I considered myself as her neighbour. In the cities of Europe, a street, even a simple wall, frequently prevents members of the same family from meeting for years; but in new colonies we consider those persons as neighbours from whom we are divided only by woods and mountains; and above all, at that period, when this island had little intercourse with the Indies, vicinity alone gave a claim to friendship, and hospitality toward strangers seemed less a duty than a pleasure. No sooner was I informed that Margaret had found a companion than I hastened to her, in the hope of being useful to my neighbour and her guest. I found Madame de la Tour possessed of all those melancholy graces which, by blending sympathy with admiration, give to beauty additional power. Her countenance was interesting, expressive at once of dignity and dejection. She appeared to be in the last stage of her pregnancy. I told the two friends that, for the future interests of their children, and to prevent the intrusion of any other settler, they had better divide between them the property of this wild, sequestered valley, which is nearly twenty acres in extent. They confided that task to me, and I marked out two equal portions of land. One included the higher part of this inclosure, from the cloudy pinnacle of that rock, whence springs the river of Fan-Palms, to that precipitous cleft which you see on the summit of the mountain, and which, from its resemblance in form to the battlement of a fortress, is called the Embrasure. It is difficult to find a path along this wild portion of the inclosure, the soil of which is encumbered with fragments of rock, or worn into channels formed by torrents; yet it produces noble trees and innumerable springs and rivulets. The other portion of land com-

prised the plain extending along the banks of the river of Fan-Palms, to the opening where we are now seated, whence the river takes its course between those two hills, until it falls into the sea. You may still trace the vestiges of some meadow-land; and this part of the common is less rugged, but not more valuable than the other; since in the rainy season it becomes marshy, and in dry weather is so hard and unyielding that it will almost resist the stroke of the pickaxe. When I had thus divided the property, I persuaded my neighbours to draw lots for their respective possessions. The higher portion of land, containing the source of the river of Fan-Palms, became the property of Madame de la Tour; the lower, comprising the plain on the banks of the river, was allotted to Margaret; and each seemed satisfied with her share. They entreated me to place their habitations together, that they might at all times enjoy the soothing intercourse of friendship and the consolation of mutual kind offices. Margaret's cottage was situated near the centre of the valley, and just on the boundary of her own plantation. Close to that spot I built another cottage for the residence of Madame de la Tour; and thus the two friends, while they possessed all the advantages of neighbourhood, lived on their own property. I myself cut palisades from the mountain, and brought leaves of fan-palms from the sea-shore, in order to construct those two cottages, of which you can now discern neither the entrance nor the roof. Yet, alas! there still remain but too many traces for my remembrance! Time, which so rapidly destroys the proud monuments of empires, seems in this desert to spare those of friendship, as if to perpetuate my regrets to the last hour of my existence.

As soon as the second cottage was finished, Madame de la Tour was delivered of a girl. I had been the god-

father of Margaret's child, who was christened by the name of Paul. Madame de la Tour desired me to perform the same office for her child also, together with her friend, who gave her the name of Virginia. "She will be virtuous," cried Margaret, "and she will be happy. I have only known misfortune by wandering from virtue."

About the time Madame de la Tour recovered, these two little estates had already begun to yield some produce, perhaps in a small degree owing to the care which I occasionally bestowed on their improvement, but far more to the indefatigable labours of the two slaves. Margaret's slave, who was called Domingo, was still healthy and robust, though advanced in years: he possessed some knowledge, and a good natural understanding. He cultivated indiscriminately, on both plantations, the spots of ground that seemed most fertile, and sowed whatever grain he thought most congenial to each particular soil. Where the ground was poor, he strewed maize; where it was most fruitful, he planted wheat; and rice in such spots as were marshy. He threw the seeds of gourds and cucumbers at the foot of the rocks, which they loved to climb, and decorate with their luxuriant foliage. In dry spots he cultivated the sweet potato; the cotton-tree flourished upon the heights, and the sugar-cane grew in the clayey soil. He reared some plants of coffee on the hills, where the grain, although small, is excellent. His plantain-trees, which spread their grateful shade on the banks of the river, and encircled the cottages, yielded fruit throughout the year. And, lastly, Domingo, to soothe his cares, cultivated a few plants of tobacco. Sometimes he was employed in cutting wood for firing from the mountain, sometimes in hewing pieces of rock within the inclosure, in order to level the paths. The zeal which inspired him enabled him to perform all these labours with intelligence and

activity. He was much attached to Margaret, and not less to Madame de la Tour, whose negro woman, Mary, he had married on the birth of Virginia; and he was passionately fond of his wife. Mary was born at Madagascar, and had there acquired the knowledge of some useful arts. She could weave baskets, and a sort of stuff, with long grass, that grows in the woods. She was active, cleanly, and, above all, faithful. It was her care to prepare their meals, to rear the poultry, and go sometimes to Port Louis, to sell the superfluous produce of these little plantations, which was not, however, very considerable. If you add to the personages already mentioned two goats, which were brought up with the children, and a great dog, which kept watch at night, you will have a complete idea of the household, as well as of the productions, of these two little farms.

Madame de la Tour and her friend were constantly employed in spinning cotton for the use of their families. Destitute of everything which their own industry could not supply, at home they went barefooted; shoes were a convenience reserved for Sunday, on which day, at an early hour, they attended mass at the church of the Shaddock Grove, which you see yonder. That church was more distant from their homes than Port Louis; but they seldom visited the town, lest they should be treated with contempt on account of their dress, which consisted simply of the coarse blue linen of Bengal, usually worn by slaves. But is there, in that external deference which fortune commands, a compensation for domestic happiness? If these interesting women had something to suffer from the world, their homes on that very account became more dear to them. No sooner did Mary and Domingo, from this elevated spot, perceive their mistresses on the road of the Shaddock Grove, than they flew to the foot of the moun-

tain in order to help them to ascend. They discerned in the looks of their domestics the joy which their return excited. They found in their retreat neatness, independence, all the blessings which are the recompense of toil, and they received the zealous services which spring from affection. United by the tie of similar wants and the sympathy of similar misfortunes, they gave each other the tender names of companion, friend, sister. They had but one will, one interest, one table. All their possessions were in common. And if sometimes a passion more ardent than friendship awakened in their hearts the pang of unavailing anguish, a pure religion, united with chaste manners, drew their affections toward another life: as the trembling flame rises, toward heaven, when it no longer finds any aliment on earth.

Madame de la Tour sometimes, leaving the household cares to Margaret, wandered out alone, and amid the sublime scenery indulged that luxury of pensive sadness which is so soothing to the mind after the first emotions of turbulent sorrow have subsided.

Sometimes she poured forth the effusions of melancholy in the language of verse, and, although her compositions have little poetical merit, they appear to me to bear the marks of genuine sensibility. Many of her poems are lost, but some still remain in my possession, and a few still hang on my memory. I will repeat to you a sonnet addressed to Love:

SONNET TO LOVE

“ Ah, Love! ere yet I knew thy fatal power,
Bright glowed the colour of my youthful days,
As, on the sultry zone, the torrid rays,
That paint the broad-leaved plaitain's glossy bower:
Calm was my bosom as this silent hour,
When o'er the deep, scarce heard, the zephyr strays,

'Midst the cool tam'rinds indolently plays,
Nor from the orange shakes its od'rous flower;
But, ah! since Love has all my heart possessed,
That desolated heart what sorrows tear!
Disturbed, and wild as ocean's troubled breast,
When the hoarse tempest of the night is there!
Yet my complaining spirit asks no rest;
This bleeding bosom cherishes despair."

The duties of maternity became a source of additional happiness to these affectionate mothers, whose mutual friendship gained new strength at the sight of their children, equally the offspring of an ill-fated attachment. They delighted in washing their infants together in the same bath, in putting them to rest in the same cradle, and in changing the maternal bosom at which they received nourishment. "My friend," cried Madame de la Tour, "we shall each of us have two children, and each of our children will have two mothers." As two buds which remain on different trees of the same kind, after the tempest has broken all their branches, produce more delicious fruit, if each, separated from the maternal stem, be grafted on the neighbouring tree; so these two infants, deprived of all their other relations, when thus exchanged for nourishment by those who had given them birth, imbibed feelings of affection still more tender than those of son and daughter, brother and sister. While they were yet in their cradles, their mothers talked of their marriage. They soothed their own cares by looking forward to the future happiness of their children; but this contemplation often drew forth their tears. The misfortunes of one mother had arisen from having neglected marriage; those of the other from having submitted to its laws. One had suffered by aiming to rise above her condition, the other by descending from her rank. But they found consolation in reflecting that their more fortunate chil-

dren, far from the cruel prejudices of Europe, would enjoy at once the pleasures of love and the blessings of equality.

Rarely, indeed, has such an attachment been seen as that which the two children already testified for each other. If Paul complained of anything, his mother pointed to Virginia; at her sight he smiled, and was appeased. If any accident befell Virginia, the cries of Paul gave notice of the disaster; but the dear little creature would suppress her complaints if she found that he was unhappy. When I came hither, I usually found them quite naked, as is the custom of the country, tottering in their walk, and holding each other by the hands and under the arms, as we see represented the constellation of The Twins. At night these infants often refused to be separated, and were found lying in the same cradle, their cheeks, their bosoms pressed close together, their hands thrown round each other's neck, and sleeping, locked in one another's arms.

When they began to speak, the first names they learned to give each other were those of brother and sister, and childhood knows no softer appellation. Their education, by directing them ever to consider each other's wants, tended greatly to increase their affection. In a short time, all the household economy, the care of preparing their rural repasts, became the task of Virginia, whose labours were always crowned with the praises and kisses of her brother. As for Paul, always in motion, he dug the garden with Domingo, or followed him with a little hatchet into the woods; and if, in his rambles, he espied a beautiful flower, any delicious fruit, or a nest of birds, even at the top of a tree, he would climb up, and bring the spoil to his sister. When you met one of these children, you might be sure the other was not far off.

One day, as I was coming down that mountain, I saw

Virginia at the end of the garden, running toward the house with her petticoat thrown over her head in order to screen herself from a shower of rain. At a distance, I thought she was alone; but as I hastened toward her in order to help her on, I perceived that she held Paul by the arm, almost entirely enveloped in the same canopy, and both were laughing heartily at their being sheltered together under an umbrella of their own invention. These two charming faces, in the middle of the swelling petticoat, recalled to my mind the children of Leda, inclosed in the same shell.

Their sole study was how they could please and assist one another; for of all other things they were ignorant, and indeed could neither read nor write. They were never disturbed by inquiries about past times, nor did their curiosity extend beyond the bounds of their mountain. They believed the world ended at the shores of their own island, and all their ideas and all their affections were confined within its limits. Their mutual tenderness, and that of their mothers, employed all the energies of their minds. Their tears had never been called forth by tedious application to useless sciences. Their minds had never been wearied by lessons of morality, superfluous to bosoms unconscious of ill. They had never been taught not to steal, because everything with them was in common; or not to be intemperate, because their simple food was left to their own discretion; or not to lie, because they had nothing to conceal. Their young imaginations had never been terrified by the idea that God has punishments in store for ungrateful children, since, with them, filial affection arose naturally from maternal tenderness. All they had been taught of religion was to love it; and if they did not offer up long prayers in the church, wherever they were—in the house, in the fields, in the woods—they raised to-

ward heaven their innocent hands, and hearts purified by virtuous affections.

All their early childhood passed thus, like a beautiful dawn, the prelude of a bright day. Already they assisted their mothers in the duties of the household. As soon as the crowing of the wakeful cock announced the first beam of the morning, Virginia arose and hastened to draw water from a neighbouring spring; then returning to the house, she prepared the breakfast. When the rising sun gilded the points of the rocks which overhang the inclosure in which they lived, Margaret and her child repaired to the dwelling of Madame de la Tour, where they offered up their morning prayer together. This sacrifice of thanksgiving always preceded their first repast, which they often took before the door of the cottage, seated upon the grass, under a canopy of plantain: and while the branches of that delicious tree afforded a grateful shade, its fruit furnished a substantial food ready prepared for them by Nature; and its long glossy leaves, spread upon the table, supplied the place of linen. Plentiful and wholesome nourishment gave early growth and vigour to the persons of these children, and their countenances expressed the purity and the peace of their souls. At twelve years of age the figure of Virginia was in some degree formed; a profusion of light hair shaded her face, to which her blue eyes and coral lips gave the most charming brilliancy. Her eyes sparkled with vivacity when she spoke; but when she was silent they were habitually turned upward, with an expression of extreme sensibility, or rather of tender melancholy. The figure of Paul began already to display the graces of youthful beauty. He was taller than Virginia: his skin was of a darker tint; his nose more aquiline; and his black eyes would have been too piercing, if the long eyelashes, by which they were shaded, had not imparted

to them an expression of softness. He was constantly in motion, except when his sister appeared, and then, seated by her side, he became still. Their meals often passed without a word being spoken; and from their silence, the simple elegance of their attitudes, and the beauty of their naked feet, you might have fancied you beheld an antique group of white marble, representing some of the children of Niobe, but for the glances of their eyes, which were constantly seeking to meet, and their mutual soft and tender smiles, which suggested rather the idea of happy celestial spirits, whose nature is love, and who are not obliged to have recourse to words for the expression of their feelings.

In the meantime Madame de la Tour, perceiving every day some unfolding grace, some new beauty, in her daughter, felt her maternal anxiety increase with her tenderness. She often said to me, "If I were to die, what will become of Virginia without fortune?"

Madame de la Tour had an aunt in France, who was a woman of quality, rich, old, and a complete devotee. She had behaved with so much cruelty toward her niece upon her marriage that Madame de la Tour had determined no extremity of distress should ever compel her to have recourse to her hard-hearted relation. But when she became a mother, the pride of resentment was overcome by the stronger feelings of maternal tenderness. She wrote to her aunt, informing her of the sudden death of her husband, the birth of her daughter, and the difficulties in which she was involved, burdened as she was with an infant, and without means of support. She received no answer; but, notwithstanding the high spirit natural to her character, she no longer feared exposing herself to mortification; and although she knew her aunt would never pardon her for having married a man who was not

of noble birth, however estimable, she continued to write to her, with the hope of awakening her compassion for Virginia. Many years, however, passed, without receiving any token of her remembrance.

At length, in 1738, three years after the arrival of Monsieur de la Bourdonnais in this island, Madame de la Tour was informed that the governor had a letter to give her from her aunt. She flew to Port Louis; maternal joy raised her mind above all trifling considerations, and she was careless on this occasion of appearing in her homely attire. Monsieur de la Bourdonnais gave her a letter from her aunt, in which she informed her that she deserved her fate for marrying an adventurer and a libertine; that the passions brought with them their own punishment; that the premature death of her husband was a just visitation from Heaven; that she had done well in going to a distant island, rather than dishonour her family by remaining in France; and that, after all, in the colony where she had taken refuge, none but the idle failed to grow rich. Having thus censured her niece, she concluded by eulogizing herself. To avoid, she said, the almost inevitable evils of marriage, she had determined to remain single. In fact, as she was of a very ambitious disposition, she had resolved to marry none but a man of high rank; but, although she was very rich, her fortune was not found a sufficient bribe, even at court, to counterbalance the malignant dispositions of her mind and the disagreeable qualities of her person.

After mature deliberation, she added in a postscript that she had strongly recommended her niece to Monsieur de la Bourdonnais. This she had indeed done, but in a manner of late too common, which renders a patron perhaps even more to be feared than a declared enemy; for, in order to justify herself for her harshness, she had

cruelly slandered her niece, while she affected to pity her misfortunes.

Madame de la Tour, whom no unprejudiced person could have seen without feelings of sympathy and respect, was received with the utmost coolness by Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, biassed as he was against her. When she painted to him her own situation, and that of her child, he replied in abrupt sentences: "We will see what can be done—there are so many to relieve—all in good time—why did you displease your aunt?—you have been much to blame."

Madame de la Tour returned to her cottage, her heart torn with grief, and filled with all the bitterness of disappointment. When she arrived, she threw her aunt's letter on the table, and exclaimed to her friend, "There is the fruit of eleven years of patient expectation!" Madame de la Tour being the only person in the little circle who could read, she again took up the letter, and read it aloud. Scarcely had she finished when Margaret exclaimed: "What have we to do with your relations? Has God then forsaken us? He only is our father. Have we not hitherto been happy? Why, then, this regret? You have no courage." Seeing Madame de la Tour in tears, she threw herself upon her neck, and pressing her in her arms, "My dear friend!" cried she, "my dear friend!"—but her emotion choked her utterance. At this sight Virginia burst into tears, and pressed her mother's and Margaret's hands alternately to her lips and heart; while Paul, his eyes inflamed with anger, cried, clasped his hands together, and stamped with his foot, not knowing whom to blame for this scene of misery. The noise soon brought Domingo and Mary to the spot, and the little habitation resounded with cries of distress: "Ah, madame!—My good mistress!—My dear mother!—Do not

weep!" These tender proofs of affection at length dispelled the grief of Madame de la Tour. She took Paul and Virginia in her arms, and, embracing them, said: "You are the cause of my affliction, my children, but you are also my only source of delight! Yes, my dear children, misfortune has reached me, but only from a distance; here, I am surrounded with happiness." Paul and Virginia did not understand this reflection; but when they saw that she was calm, they smiled, and continued to caress her. Tranquility was thus restored in this happy family, and all that had passed was but as a storm in the midst of fine weather, which disturbs the serenity of the atmosphere but for a short time, and then passes away.

Although Madame de la Tour appeared calm in the presence of her family, she sometimes communicated to me the feelings that preyed upon her mind, and soon after this period gave me the following sonnet:

SONNET TO DISAPPOINTMENT

"Pale Disappointment! at thy freezing name
Chill fears in every shivering vein I prove;
My sinking pulse almost forgets to move,
And life almost forsakes my languid frame:
Yet thee, relentless nymph! no more I blame:
Why do my thoughts 'midst vain illusions rove?
Why gild the charms of friendship and of love
With the warm glow of fancy's purple flame?
When ruffling winds have some bright fane o'erthrown,
Which shone on painted clouds, or seemed to shine,
Shall the fond gazer dream for him alone
Those clouds were stable, and at fate repine?
I feel, alas! the fault is all my own,
And, ah! the cruel punishment is mine!"

The amiable disposition of these children unfolded itself daily. One Sunday, at daybreak, their mothers having gone to mass at the church of the Shaddock Grove, the children perceived a negro woman beneath the plantains which surrounded their habitation. She appeared

almost wasted to a skeleton, and had no other garment than a piece of coarse cloth thrown around her. She threw herself at the feet of Virginia, who was preparing the family breakfast, and said: "My good young lady, have pity on a poor runaway slave. For a whole month I have wandered among these mountains, half-dead with hunger, and often pursued by the hunters and their dogs. I fled from my master, a rich planter of the Black River, who has used me as you see"; and she showed her body marked with scars from the lashes she had received. She added: "I was going to drown myself; but hearing you lived here, I said to myself, 'Since there are still some good white people in this country, I need not die yet.'" Virginia answered with emotion: "Take courage, unfortunate creature! here is something to eat"; and she gave her the breakfast she had been preparing, which the slave in a few minutes devoured. When her hunger was appeased, Virginia said to her: "Poor woman! I should like to go and ask forgiveness for you of your master. Surely the sight of you will touch him with pity. Will you show me the way?"—"Angel of heaven!" answered the poor negro woman, "I will follow you where you please." Virginia called her brother, and begged him to accompany her. The slave led the way, by winding and difficult paths through the woods, over mountains, which they climbed with difficulty, and across rivers, through which they were obliged to wade. At length, about the middle of the day, they reached the foot of a steep descent upon the borders of the Black River. There they perceived a well-built house, surrounded by extensive plantations, and a number of slaves employed in their various labours. Their master was walking among them with a pipe in his mouth and a switch in his hand. He was a tall, thin man, of a brown complexion; his eyes were sunk in

his head, and his dark eyebrows were joined in one. Virginia, holding Paul by the hand, drew near, and with much emotion begged him, for the love of God, to pardon his poor slave, who stood trembling a few paces behind. The planter at first paid little attention to the children, who, he saw, were meanly dressed. But when he observed the elegance of Virginia's form, and the profusion of her beautiful light tresses, which had escaped from beneath her blue cap; when he heard the soft tone of her voice, which trembled, as well as her whole frame, while she implored his compassion, he took the pipe from his mouth, and, lifting up his stick, swore, with a terrible oath, that he pardoned his slave, not for the love of Heaven, but of her who asked his forgiveness. Virginia made a sign to the slave to approach her master, and instantly sprang away, followed by Paul.

They climbed up the steep they had descended; and having gained the summit, seated themselves at the foot of a tree, overcome with fatigue, hunger, and thirst. They had left their home fasting, and had walked five leagues since sunrise. Paul said to Virginia: "My dear sister, it is past noon, and I am sure you are thirsty and hungry: we shall find no dinner here; let us go down the mountain again, and ask the master of the poor slave for some food."—"Oh, no," answered Virginia, "he frightens me too much. Remember what mamma sometimes says, 'The bread of the wicked is like stones in the mouth.'"—"What shall we do, then?" said Paul; "these trees produce no fruit fit to eat; and I shall not be able to find even a tamarind or a lemon to refresh you."—"God will take care of us," replied Virginia; "he listens to the cry even of the little birds when they ask him for food." Scarcely had she pronounced these words when they heard the noise of water falling from a neighbouring rock. They

ran thither, and having quenched their thirst at this crystal spring, they gathered and ate a few cresses which grew on the border of the stream. Soon afterward, while they were wandering backward and forward in search of more solid nourishment, Virginia perceived, in the thickest part of the forest, a young palm-tree. The kind of cabbage which is found at the top of the palm, enfolded within its leaves, is well adapted for food; but although the stalk of the tree is not thicker than a man's leg, it grows to above sixty feet in height. The wood of the tree, indeed, is composed only of very fine filaments; but the bark is so hard that it turns the edge of the hatchet, and Paul was not furnished even with a knife. At length he thought of setting fire to the palm-tree, but a new difficulty occurred: he had no steel with which to strike fire; and although the whole island is covered with rocks, I do not believe it is possible to find a single flint. Necessity, however, is fertile in expedients, and the most useful inventions have arisen from men placed in the most destitute situations. Paul determined to kindle a fire in the manner of the negroes. With the sharp end of a stone he made a small hole in the branch of a tree that was quite dry, and which he held between his feet: he then, with the edge of the same stone, brought to a point another dry branch of a different sort of wood, and afterward, placing the piece of pointed wood in the small hole of the branch which he held with his feet, and turning it rapidly between his hands, in a few minutes smoke and sparks of fire issued from the point of contact. Paul then heaped together dried grass and branches, and set fire to the foot of the palm-tree, which soon fell to the ground with a tremendous crash. The fire was further useful to him in stripping off the long, thick, and pointed leaves, within which the cabbage was inclosed. Having thus succeeded in obtaining this fruit,

they ate part of it raw, and part dressed upon the ashes, which they found equally palatable. They made this frugal repast with delight, from the remembrance of the benevolent action they had performed in the morning; yet their joy was embittered by the thoughts of the uneasiness which their long absence from home would occasion their mothers. Virginia often recurred to this subject; but Paul, who felt his strength renewed by their meal, assured her that it would not be long before they reached home, and, by the assurance of their safety, tranquillized the minds of their parents.

After dinner they were much embarrassed by the recollection that they had now no guide, and that they were ignorant of the way. Paul, whose spirit was not subdued by difficulties, said to Virginia: "The sun shines full upon our huts at noon; we must pass, as we did this morning, over that mountain with its three points, which you see yonder. Come, let us be moving." This mountain was that of the Three Breasts, so called from the form of its three peaks. They then descended the steep bank of the Black River, on the northern side, and arrived, after an hour's walk, on the banks of a large river, which stopped their further progress. This large portion of the island, covered as it is with forests, is even now so little known that many of its rivers and mountains have not yet received a name. The stream, on the banks of which Paul and Virginia were now standing, rolls foaming over a bed of rocks. The noise of the water frightened Virginia, and she was afraid to wade through the current. Paul therefore took her up in his arms, and went thus loaded over the slippery rocks, which formed the bed of the river, careless of the tumultuous noise of its waters. "Do not be afraid," cried he to Virginia, "I feel very strong with you. If that planter at the Black River had refused you

the pardon of his slave, I would have fought with him.”—“What!” answered Virginia, “with that great wicked man? To what have I exposed you! Gracious Heaven! How difficult it is to do good! and yet it is so easy to do wrong.”

When Paul had crossed the river, he wished to continue the journey carrying his sister; and he flattered himself that he could ascend in that way the Mountain of the Three Breasts, which was still at the distance of half a league; but his strength soon failed, and he was obliged to set down his burden and to rest himself by her side. Virginia then said to him: “My dear brother, the sun is going down; you have still some strength left, but mine has quite failed; do leave me here, and return home alone to ease the fears of our mothers.”—“Oh, no,” said Paul, “I will not leave you. If night overtakes us in this wood, I will light a fire, and bring down another palm-tree; you shall eat the cabbage, and I will form a covering of the leaves to shelter you.” In the meantime, Virginia being a little rested, she gathered from the trunk of an old tree, which overhung the bank of the river, some long leaves of the plant called hart’s tongue, which grew near its root. Of these leaves she made a sort of buskin, with which she covered her feet, that were bleeding from the sharpness of the stony paths; for, in her eager desire to do good, she had forgotten to put on her shoes. Feeling her feet cooled by the freshness of the leaves, she broke off a branch of bamboo and continued her walk, leaning with one hand on the staff and with the other on Paul.

They walked on in this manner slowly through the woods; but from the height of the trees, and the thickness of their foliage, they soon lost sight of the Mountain of the Three Breasts, by which they had hitherto directed their course, and also of the sun, which was now setting.

At length they wandered, without perceiving it, from the beaten path in which they had hitherto walked, and found themselves in a labyrinth of trees, underwood, and rocks, whence there appeared to be no outlet. Paul made Virginia sit down, while he ran backward and forward, half-frantic, in search of a path which might lead them out of this thick wood; but he fatigued himself to no purpose. He then climbed to the top of a lofty tree, whence he hoped at least to perceive the Mountain of the Three Breasts; but he could discern nothing around him but the tops of trees, some of which were gilded with the last beams of the setting sun. Already the shadows of the mountains were spreading over the forests in the valleys. The wind lulled, as is usually the case at sunset. The most profound silence reigned in those awful solitudes, which was only interrupted by the cry of the deer, who came to their lairs in that unfrequented spot. Paul, in the hope that some hunter would hear his voice, called out as loud as he was able, "Come, come to the help of Virginia!" But the echoes of the forest alone answered his call, and repeated again and again, "Virginia—Virginia!"

Paul at length descended from the tree, overcome with fatigue and vexation. He looked around in order to make some arrangement for passing the night in that desert; but he could find neither fountain nor palm-tree, nor even a branch of dry wood fit for kindling a fire. He was then impressed, by experience, with the sense of his own weakness, and began to weep. Virginia said to him: "Do not weep, my dear brother, or I shall be overwhelmed with grief. I am the cause of all your sorrow, and of all that our mothers are suffering at this moment. I find we ought to do nothing, not even good, without consulting our parents. Oh, I have been very imprudent!" and she began to shed tears. "Let us pray to God, my dear brother,"

she again said, "and he will hear us." They had scarcely finished their prayer when they heard the barking of a dog. "It must be the dog of some hunter," said Paul, "who comes here at night, to lie in wait for the deer." Soon after, the dog began barking again with increased violence. "Surely," said Virginia, "it is Fidele, our own dog: yes—now I know his bark. Are we, then, so near home? At the foot of our own mountain?" A moment after, Fidele was at their feet, barking, howling, moaning, and devouring them with his caresses. Before they could recover from their surprise, they saw Domingo running toward them. At the sight of the good old negro, who wept for joy, they began to weep too, but had not the power to utter a syllable. When Domingo had recovered himself a little, "Oh, my dear children," said he, "how miserable have you made your mothers! How astonished they were, when they returned with me from mass, on not finding you at home! Mary, who was at work at a little distance, could not tell us where you were gone. I ran backward and forward in the plantation, not knowing where to look for you. At last I took some of your old clothes, and, showing them to Fidele, the poor animal, as if he understood me, immediately began to scent upon your path; and conducted me, wagging his tail all the while, to the Black River. I there saw a planter, who told me you had brought back a Maroon negro woman, his slave, and that he had pardoned her at your request. But what a pardon! he showed her to me with her feet chained to a block of wood, and an iron collar with three hooks fastened round her neck! After that, Fidele, still on the scent, led me up the steep bank of the Black River, where he again stopped, and barked with all his might. This was on the brink of a spring, near which was a fallen palm-tree, and a fire, still smoking. At last he led me to this

very spot. We are now at the foot of the Mountain of the Three Breasts, and still four good leagues from home. Come, eat, and recover your strength." Domingo then presented them with a cake, some fruit, and a large gourd, full of a beverage composed of wine, water, lemon-juice, sugar, and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared to invigorate and refresh them. Virginia sighed at the recollection of the poor slave, and at the uneasiness they had given their mothers. She repeated several times, "Oh, how difficult it is to do good!" While she and Paul were taking refreshment, it being already night, Domingo kindled a fire; and having found among the rocks a particular kind of twisted wood called *bois de ronde*, which burns when quite green, and throws out a great blaze, he made a torch of it, which he lighted. But when they prepared to continue their journey, a new difficulty occurred: Paul and Virginia could no longer walk, their feet being violently swollen and inflamed. Domingo knew not what to do: whether to leave them and go in search of help, or remain and pass the night with them on that spot. "There was a time," said he, "when I could carry you both together in my arms. But now you are grown big, and I am grown old." While he was in this perplexity, a troop of Maroon negroes appeared at a short distance from them. The chief of the band, approaching Paul and Virginia, said to them: "Good little white people, do not be afraid. We saw you pass this morning with a negro woman of the Black River. You went to ask pardon for her of her wicked master; and we, in return for this, will carry you home upon our shoulders." He then made a sign, and four of the strongest negroes immediately formed a sort of litter with the branches of trees and lianas, and having seated Paul and Virginia on it, carried them upon their shoulders. Domingo marched in front with his

lighted torch, and they proceeded amid the rejoicings of the whole troop, who overwhelmed them with their benedictions. Virginia, affected by this scene, said to Paul, with emotion: "Oh, my dear brother! God never leaves a good action unrewarded."

It was midnight when they arrived at the foot of their mountain, on the ridges of which several fires were lighted. As soon as they began to ascend, they heard voices exclaiming, "Is it you, my children?" They answered immediately, and the negroes also, "Yes, yes, it is." A moment after they could distinguish their mothers and Mary coming toward them with lighted sticks in their hands. "Unhappy children," cried Madame de la Tour, "where have you been? What agonies you have made us suffer!"—"We have been," said Virginia, "to the Black River, where we went to ask pardon for a poor Maroon slave, to whom I gave our breakfast this morning, because she seemed dying of hunger; and these Maroon negroes have brought us home." Madame de la Tour embraced her daughter, without being able to speak; and Virginia, who felt her face wet with her mother's tears, exclaimed, "Now I am repaid for all the hardships I have suffered."

Margaret, in a transport of delight, pressed Paul in her arms, exclaiming: "And you also, my dear child! you have done a good action." When they reached the cottages with their children, they entertained all the negroes with a plentiful repast, after which the latter returned to their woods, praying Heaven to shower down every description of blessing on those good white people.

Every day was to these families a day of happiness and of tranquility. Neither ambition nor envy disturbed their repose. They did not seek to obtain a useless reputation out of doors, which may be procured by artifice, and lost

by calumny; but were contented to be the sole witnesses and judges of their own actions. In this island, where, as is the case in most colonies, scandal forms the principal topic of conversation, their virtues, and even their names, were unknown. The passer-by on the road to the Shaddock Grove, indeed, would sometimes ask the inhabitants of the plain, who lived in the cottages up there? and was always told, even by those who did not know them, "They are good people." The modest violet thus, concealed in thorny places, sheds all unseen its delightful fragrance around.

Slander, which, under an appearance of justice, naturally inclines the heart to falsehood or to hatred, was entirely banished from their conversation; for it is impossible not to hate men if we believe them to be wicked, or to live with the wicked without concealing that hatred under a false pretence of good feeling. Slander thus puts us ill at ease with others and with ourselves. In this little circle, therefore, the conduct of individuals was not discussed, but the best manner of doing good to all; and although they had but little in their power, their unceasing goodwill and kindness of heart made them constantly ready to do what they could for others. Solitude, far from having blunted these benevolent feelings, had rendered their dispositions even more kindly. Although the petty scandals of the day furnished no subject of conversation to them, yet the contemplation of Nature filled their minds with enthusiastic delight. They adored the bounty of that Providence which, by their instrumentality, had spread abundance and beauty amid these barren rocks, and had enabled them to enjoy those pure and simple pleasures which are ever grateful and ever new. It was probably in those dispositions of mind that Madame de la Tour composed the following sonnet:

SONNET TO SIMPLICITY

"Nymph of the desert! on this lonely shore,
Simplicity, thy blessings still are mine,
And all thou canst not give I pleased resign,
For all beside canst soothe my soul no more.
I ask no lavish heaps to swell my store,
And purchase pleasures far remote from thine.
Ye joys, for which the race of Europe pine,
Ah! not for me your studied grandeur pour:
Let me where yon tall cliffs are rudely piled,
Where towers the palm amid the mountain trees,
Where pendent from the steep, with graces wild,
The blue liana floats upon the breeze,
Still haunt those bold recesses, Nature's child,
Where thy majestic charms my spirit seize!"

Paul, at twelve years of age, was stronger and more intelligent than most European youths are at fifteen; and the plantations, which Domingo merely cultivated, were all embellished by him. He would go with the old negro into the neighbouring woods, where he would root up the young plants of lemon, orange, and tamarind trees, the round heads of which are of so fresh a green, together with date-palm trees, which produce fruit filled with a sweet cream, possessing the fine perfume of the orange flower. These trees, which had already attained to a considerable size, he planted round their little inclosure. He had also sown the seeds of many trees which the second year bear flowers or fruit; such as the agathis, encircled with long clusters of white flowers, which hang from it like the crystal pendants of a chandelier; the Persian lilac, which lifts high in air its gray flax-coloured branches; the papaw-tree, the branchless trunk of which forms a column studded with green melons, surmounted by a capital of broad leaves similar to those of the fig-tree.

The seeds and kernels of the gum-tree, terminalia, mango, alligator pear, the guava, the bread-fruit tree, and the narrow-leaved rose-apple, were also planted by him

with profusion; and the greater number of these trees already afforded their young cultivator both shade and fruit. His industrious hands diffused the riches of Nature over even the most barren parts of the plantation. Several species of aloes, the Indian fig, adorned with yellow flowers spotted with red, and the thorny torch-thistle, grew upon the dark summits of the rocks, and seemed to aim at reaching the long lianas, which, laden with blue or scarlet flowers, hung scattered over the steepest parts of the mountain.

I loved to trace the ingenuity he had exercised in the arrangement of these trees. He had so disposed them that the whole could be seen at a single glance. In the middle of the hollow he had planted shrubs of the lowest growth; behind grew the more lofty sorts; then trees of the ordinary height; and beyond and above all, the venerable and lofty groves which border the circumference. Thus this extensive inclosure appeared, from its centre, like a verdant amphitheatre, decorated with fruits and flowers, containing a variety of vegetables, some strips of meadow-land, and fields of rice and corn. But, in arranging these vegetable productions to his own taste, he wandered not too far from the designs of Nature. Guided by her suggestions, he had thrown upon the elevated spots such seeds as the winds would scatter about, and near the borders of the springs those which float upon the water. Every plant thus grew in its proper soil, and every spot seemed decorated by Nature's own hand. The streams which fell from the summits of the rocks formed in some parts of the valley sparkling cascades, and in others were spread into broad mirrors, in which were reflected, set in verdure, the flowering trees, the overhanging rocks, and the azure heavens.

Notwithstanding the great irregularity of the ground,

these plantations were, for the most part, easy of access. We had, indeed, all given him our advice and assistance, in order to accomplish this end. He had conducted one path entirely round the valley, and various branches from it led from the circumference to the centre. He had drawn some advantage from the most rugged spots, and had blended, in harmonious union, level walks with the inequalities of the soil, and trees which grow wild with the cultivated varieties. With that immense quantity of large pebbles which now block up these paths, and which are scattered over most of the ground of this island, he formed pyramidal heaps here and there, at the base of which he laid mould, and planted rose-bushes, the Barbadoes flower-fence, and other shrubs which love to climb the rocks. In a short time the dark and shapeless heaps of stones he had constructed were covered with verdure, or with the glowing tints of the most beautiful flowers. Hollow recesses on the borders of the streams, shaded by the overhanging boughs of aged trees, formed rural grottoes, impervious to the rays of the sun, in which you might enjoy a refreshing coolness during the midday heats. One path led to a clump of forest trees, in the centre of which, sheltered from the wind, you found a fruit-tree, laden with produce. Here was a cornfield; there, an orchard: from one avenue you had a view of the cottages; from another, of the inaccessible summit of the mountain. Beneath one tufted bower of gum-trees, interwoven with lianas, no object whatever could be perceived; while the point of the adjoining rock, jutting out from the mountain, commanded a view of the whole inclosure, and of the distant ocean, where, occasionally, we could discern the distant sail arriving from Europe, or bound thither. On this rock the two families frequently met in the evening, and enjoyed in silence the freshness of the flowers, the gentle

murmurs of the fountains, and the last blended harmonies of light and shade.

Nothing could be more charming than the names which were bestowed upon some of the delightful retreats of this labyrinth. The rock of which I have been speaking, whence they could discern my approach at a considerable distance, was called the Discovery of Friendship. Paul and Virginia had amused themselves by planting a bamboo on that spot; and whenever they saw me coming they hoisted a little white handkerchief by way of signal of my approach, as they had seen a flag hoisted on the neighbouring mountain on the sight of a vessel at sea. The idea struck me of engraving an inscription on the stalk of this reed; for I never, in the course of my travels, experienced anything like the pleasure in seeing a statue or other monument of ancient art, as in reading a well-written inscription. It seems to me as if a human voice issued from the stone, and, making itself heard after the lapse of ages, addressed man in the midst of a desert, to tell him that he is not alone, and that other men, on that very spot, had felt, and thought, and suffered like himself. If the inscription belongs to an ancient nation, which no longer exists, it leads the soul through infinite space, and strengthens the consciousness of its immortality, by demonstrating that a thought has survived the ruins of an empire.

I inscribed then, on the little staff of Paul and Virginia's flag, the following lines of Horace:

"May the brothers of Helen, bright stars like you, and
the Father of the winds, guide you; and may
you feel only the breath of the zephyr."

There was a gum-tree, under the shade of which Paul was accustomed to sit to contemplate the sea when agi-

tated by storms. On the bark of this tree I engraved the following line from Virgil:

“Happy art thou, my son, in knowing only the pastoral divinities.”

And over the door of Madame de la Tour’s cottage, where the families so frequently met, I placed this line:

“Here dwell a calm conscience, and a life that knows not deceit.”

But Virginia did not approve of my Latin: she said that what I had placed at the foot of her flagstaff was too long and too learned. “I should have liked better,” added she, “to have seen inscribed, EVER AGITATED, YET CONSTANT.”—“Such a motto,” I answered, “would have been still more applicable to virtue.” My reflection made her blush. The delicacy of sentiment of these happy families was manifested in everything around them. They gave the tenderest names to objects in appearance the most indifferent. A border of orange, plantain, and rose-apple trees, planted round a greensward where Paul and Virginia sometimes danced, received the name of Concord. An old tree, beneath the shade of which Madame de la Tour and Margaret used to recount their misfortunes, was called The Burial-place of Tears. They bestowed the names of Brittany and Normandy on two little plots of ground, where they had sown corn, strawberries, and pease. Domingo and Mary, wishing, in imitation of their mistresses, to recall to mind Angola and Foullepointhe, the places of their birth in Africa, gave those names to the little fields where the grass was sown with which they wove their baskets, and where they had planted a calabash-tree. Thus, by cultivating the productions of their respective climates, these exiled families cherished the dear allusions which bind us to our native country, and softened their regrets in a foreign land. Alas!

I have seen these trees, these fountains, these heaps of stones, which are now so completely overthrown—which now, like the desolated plains of Greece, present nothing but masses of ruin and affecting remembrances, all but called into life by the many charming appellations thus bestowed upon them!

Neither the neglect of her European friends, nor the delightful romantic spot which she inhabited, could banish from the mind of Madame de la Tour this tender attachment to her native country. While the luxurious fruits of this climate gratified the taste of her family, she delighted to rear those which were more grateful only because they were the productions of her early home. Among other little pieces addressed to flowers and fruits of northern climes, I found the following sonnet to the Strawberry:

SONNET TO THE STRAWBERRY

"The strawberry blooms upon its lowly bed—
Plant of my native soil! The lime may fling
More potent fragrance on the zephyr's wing,
The milky cocoa richer juices shed,
The white guava lovelier blossoms spread;
But not, like thee, to fond remembrance bring
The vanished hours of life's enchanting spring.
Short calendar of joys forever fled!
Thou bidst the scenes of childhood rise to view,
The wild wood path which fancy loves to trace,
Where, veiled in leaves, thy fruit, of rosy hue,
Lurked on its pliant stem with modest grace.
But, ah, when thought would later years renew,
Alas! successive sorrows crowd the space."

But perhaps the most delightful spot of this inclosure was that called Virginia's Resting-place. At the foot of the rock, which bore the name of The Discovery of Friendship, is a small crevice, whence issues a fountain, forming, near its source, a little spot of marshy soil in the middle of a field of rich grass. At the time of Paul's birth I had

made Margaret a present of an Indian cocoa which had been given me, and which she planted on the border of this fenny ground, in order that the tree might one day serve to mark the epoch of her son's birth. Madame de la Tour planted another cocoa, with the same view, at the birth of Virginia. These nuts produced two cocoa-trees, which formed the only records of the two families; one was called Paul's tree, the other Virginia's. Their growth was in the same proportion as that of the two young persons, not exactly equal; but they rose, at the end of twelve years, above the roofs of the cottages. Already their tender stalks were interwoven, and clusters of young cocoas hung from them over the basin of the fountain. With the exception of these two trees, this nook of the rock was left as it had been decorated by Nature. On its embrowned and moist sides broad plants of maiden-hair glistened with their green and dark stars; and tufts of wave-leaved hart's tongue, suspended like long ribbons of purpled green, floated on the wind. Near this grew a chain of the Madagascar periwinkle, the flowers of which resembled the red gilly-flower; and the long-podded cap-sicum, the seed-vessels of which are of the colour of blood, and more resplendent than coral. Near them, the herb balm, with its heart-shaped leaves, and the sweet basil, which has the odour of the clove, exhaled the most delicious perfumes. From the precipitous side of the mountain hung the graceful lianas, like floating draperies, forming magnificent canopies of verdure on the face of the rocks. The sea-birds, allured by the stillness of these retreats, resorted here to pass the night. At the hour of sunset we could perceive the curlew and the stint skimming along the sea-shore; the frigate-bird poised, high in air; and the white bird of the tropic, which abandons, with the star of day, the solitudes of the Indian Ocean. Vir-

ginia took pleasure in resting herself upon the border of this fountain, decorated with wild and sublime magnificence. She often went thither to wash the linen of the family beneath the shade of the two cocoa-trees, and thither too she sometimes led her goats to graze. While she was making cheeses of their milk, she loved to see them browse on the maiden-hair fern which clothed the steep sides of the rock, and hung suspended by one of its cornices, as on a pedestal. Paul, observing that Virginia was fond of this sport, brought thither, from the neighbouring forest, a great variety of birds' nests. The old birds, following their young, soon established themselves in this new colony. Virginia, at stated times, distributed among them grains of rice, millet, and maize. As soon as she appeared, the whistling blackbird, the amadavid bird, whose note is so soft, the cardinal with its flame-coloured plumage, forsook their bushes; the paroquet, green as an emerald, descended from the neighbouring fan-palms; the partridge ran along the grass: all advanced promiscuously toward her, like a brood of chickens; and she and Paul found an exhaustless source of amusement in observing their sports, their repasts, and their loves.

Amiable children! thus passed your earlier days in innocence, and in obeying the impulses of kindness. How many times, on this very spot, have your mothers, pressing you in their arms, blessed Heaven for the consolations your unfolding virtues prepared for their declining years, while they at the same time enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing you begin life under the happiest auspices! How many times, beneath the shade of those rocks, have I partaken with them of your rural repasts, which never cost any animal its life! Gourds full of milk, fresh eggs, cakes of rice served up on plantain leaves, with baskets of mangoes, oranges, dates, pomegranates, pineapples, furnished

a wholesome repast, the most agreeable to the eye, as well as delicious to the taste, that can possibly be imagined.

Like the repast, the conversation was mild, and free from everything having a tendency to do harm. Paul often talked of the labours of the day and of the morrow. He was continually planning something for the accommodation of their little society. Here he discovered that the paths were rugged; there, that the seats were uncomfortable; sometimes the young arbours did not afford sufficient shade, and Virginia might be better pleased elsewhere.

During the rainy season the two families met together in the cottage, and employed themselves in weaving mats of grass and baskets of bamboo. Rakes, spades, and hatchets were ranged along the walls in the most perfect order; and near these instruments of agriculture were heaped its products—bags of rice, sheaves of corn, and baskets of plantains. Some degree of luxury usually accompanies abundance; and Virginia was taught by her mother and Margaret to prepare sherbet and cordials from the juice of the sugar-cane, the lemon, and the citron.

When night came, they all supped together by the light of a lamp; after which Madame de la Tour or Margaret related some story of travellers benighted in those woods of Europe that are still infested by banditti; or told a dismal tale of some shipwrecked vessel, thrown by the tempest upon the rocks of a desert island. To these recitals the children listened with eager attention, and earnestly hoped that Heaven would one day grant them the joy of performing the rites of hospitality toward such unfortunate persons. When the time for repose arrived, the two families separated and retired for the night, eager to meet again the following morning. Sometimes they were lulled to repose by the beating of the rains, which fell in torrents upon the roofs of their cottages, and some-

times by the hollow winds, which brought to their ear the distant roar of the waves breaking upon the shore. They blessed God for their own safety, the feeling of which was brought home more forcibly to their minds by the sound of remote danger. Madame de la Tour occasionally read aloud some affecting history of the Old or New Testament. Her auditors reasoned but little upon these sacred volumes, for their theology centred in a feeling of devotion toward the Supreme Being, like that of Nature; and their morality was an active principle, like that of the Gospel. These families had no particular days devoted to pleasure, and others to sadness. Every day was to them a holiday, and all that surrounded them one holy temple, in which they ever adored the Infinite Intelligence, the Almighty God, the friend of human kind. A feeling of confidence in his supreme power filled their minds with consolation for the past, with fortitude under present trials, and with hope in the future. Compelled by misfortune to return almost to a state of nature, these excellent women had thus developed in their own and their children's bosoms the feelings most natural to the human mind, and its best support under affliction.

But, as clouds sometimes arise, and cast a gloom over the best-regulated tempers, so whenever any member of this little society appeared to be labouring under dejection, the rest assembled around, and endeavoured to banish all painful thoughts by amusing the mind rather than by grave arguments against them. Each performed this kind office in his own appropriate manner: Margaret, by her gaiety; Madame de la Tour, by the gentle consolations of religion; Virginia, by her tender caresses; Paul, by his frank and engaging cordiality. Even Mary and Domingo hastened to offer their succour, and to weep with those that wept. Thus do weak plants interweave themselves

with each other, in order to withstand the fury of the tempest.

During the fine season, they went every Sunday to the church of the Shaddock Grove, the steeple of which you see yonder upon the plain. Many wealthy members of the congregation, who came to church in palanquins, sought the acquaintance of these united families, and invited them to parties of pleasure. But they always repelled these overtures with respectful politeness, as they were persuaded that the rich and powerful seek the society of persons in an inferior station only for the sake of surrounding themselves with flatterers, and that every flatterer must applaud alike all the actions of his patron, whether good or bad. On the other hand, they avoided, with equal care, too intimate an acquaintance with the lower class, who are ordinarily jealous, calumniating, and gross. They thus acquired, with some, the character of being timid, and with others, of pride: but their reserve was accompanied with so much obliging politeness, above all toward the unfortunate and the unhappy, that they insensibly acquired the respect of the rich and the confidence of the poor.

After service, some kind office was often required at their hands by their poor neighbours. Sometimes a person troubled in mind sought their advice; sometimes a child begged them to visit its sick mother, in one of the adjoining hamlets. They always took with them a few remedies for the ordinary diseases of the country, which they administered in that soothing manner which stamps a value upon the smallest favours. Above all, they met with singular success in administering to the disorders of the mind, so intolerable in solitude, and under the infirmities of a weakened frame. Madame de la Tour spoke with such sublime confidence of the Divinity, that the sick,

while listening to her, almost believed him present. Virginia often returned home with her eyes full of tears, and her heart overflowing with delight, at having had an opportunity of doing good; for to her generally was confided the task of preparing and administering the medicines—a task which she fulfilled with angelic sweetness. After these visits of charity, they sometimes extended their walk by the Sloping Mountain, till they reached my dwelling, where I used to prepare dinner for them on the banks of the little rivulet which glides near my cottage. I procured for these occasions a few bottles of old wine, in order to heighten the relish of our Oriental repast by the more genial productions of Europe. At other times we met on the sea-shore, at the mouth of some little river, or rather mere brook. We brought from home the provisions furnished us by our gardens, to which we added those supplied us by the sea in abundant variety. We caught on these shores the mullet, the roach, and the sea-urchin, lobsters, shrimps, crabs, oysters, and all other kinds of shell-fish. In this way, we often enjoyed the most tranquil pleasures in situations the most terrific. Sometimes, seated upon a rock under the shade of the velvet sunflower-tree, we saw the enormous waves of the Indian Ocean break beneath our feet with a tremendous noise. Paul, who could swim like a fish, would advance on the reefs to meet the coming billows; then, at their near approach, would run back to the beach, closely pursued by the foaming breakers, which threw themselves, with a roaring noise, far on the sands. But Virginia, at this sight, uttered piercing cries, and said that such sports frightened her too much. Sometimes on that spot we listened to the plaintive strains of the water curlew. Madame de la Tour answered his sorrowful notes in the following sonnet:

SONNET TO THE CURLEW

"Soothed by the murmurs on the sea-beat shore,
His dun gray plumage floating to the gale,
The curlew blends his melancholy wail,
With those hoarse sounds the rushing waters pour.
Like thee, congenial bird! my steps explore
The bleak lone sea-beach, or the rocky dale,
And shun the orange bower, the myrtle vale,
Whose gay luxuriance suits my soul no more.
I love the ocean's broad expanse, when dressed
In limpid clearness, or when tempests blow,
When the smooth currents on its placid breast
Flow calm, as my past moments used to flow;
Or when its troubled waves refuse to rest,
And seem the symbol of my present woe."

Other amusements were not wanting on these festive occasions. Our repasts were generally followed by the songs and dances of the two young people. Virginia sang the happiness of pastoral life, and the misery of those who were impelled by avarice to cross the raging ocean, rather than cultivate the earth, and enjoy its bounties in peace. Sometimes she performed a pantomime with Paul, after the manner of the negroes. The first language of man is pantomime; it is known to all nations, and is so natural and expressive, that the children of the European inhabitants catch it with facility from the negroes. Virginia, recalling, from among the histories which her mother had read to her, those which had affected her most, represented the principal events in them with beautiful simplicity. Sometimes at the sound of Domingo's tamtam she appeared upon the greensward, bearing a pitcher upon her head, and advanced with a timid step toward the source of a neighbouring fountain, to draw water. Domingo and Mary, personating the shepherds of Midian, forbade her to approach, and repulsed her sternly. Upon this Paul flew to her succour, beat away the shepherds, filled Virginia's pitcher, and, placing it upon her head, bound her brows at the same time with a wreath of the red flowers

of the Madagascar periwinkle, which served to heighten the delicacy of her complexion. Then, joining in their sports, I took upon myself the part of Raguel, and bestowed upon Paul my daughter Zephora in marriage.

Another time Virginia would represent the unhappy Ruth, returning poor and widowed with her mother-in-law, who, after so prolonged an absence, found herself as unknown as in a foreign land. Domingo and Mary personated the reapers. The supposed daughter of Naomi followed their steps, gleaned here and there a few ears of corn. When interrogated by Paul—a part which he performed with the gravity of a patriarch—she answered his questions with a faltering voice. He then, touched with compassion, granted an asylum to innocence, and hospitality to misfortune. He filled her lap with plenty; and, leading her toward us as before the elders of the city, declared his purpose to take her in marriage. At this scene, Madame de la Tour, recalling the desolate situation in which she had been left by her relations, her widowhood, and the kind reception she had met with from Margaret, succeeded now by the soothing hope of a happy union between their children, could not forbear weeping; and these mixed recollections of good and evil caused us all to unite with her in shedding tears of sorrow and of joy.

These dramas were performed with such an air of reality, that you might have fancied yourself transported to the plains of Syria or of Palestine. We were not unfurnished with decorations, lights, or an orchestra, suitable to the representation. The scene was generally placed in an open space of the forest, the diverging paths from which formed around us numerous arcades of foliage, under which we were sheltered from the heat all the middle of the day; but when the sun descended toward the horizon, its rays, broken by the trunks of the trees, darted among the

shadows of the forest in long lines of light, producing the most magnificent effect. Sometimes its broad disk appeared at the end of an avenue, lighting it up with insufferable brightness. The foliage of the trees, illuminated from beneath by its saffron beams, glowed with the lustre of the topaz and the emerald. Their brown and mossy trunks appeared transformed into columns of antique bronze; and the birds, which had retired in silence to their leafy shades to pass the night, surprised to see the radiance of a second morning, hailed the star of day all together with innumerable carols.

Night often overtook us during these rural entertainments; but the purity of the air, and the warmth of the climate, admitted of our sleeping in the woods, without incurring any danger by exposure to the weather, and no less secure from the molestation of robbers. On our return the following day to our respective habitations, we found them in exactly the same state in which they had been left. In this island, then unsophisticated by the pursuits of commerce, such were the honesty and primitive manners of the population, that the doors of many houses were without a key, and even a lock itself was an object of curiosity to not a few of the native inhabitants.

Amid the luxuriant beauty of this favoured climate, Madame de la Tour often regretted the quick succession from day to night which takes place between the tropics, and which deprived her pensive mind of that hour of twilight, the softened gloom of which is so soothing and sacred to the feelings of tender melancholy. This regret is expressed in the following sonnet:

SONNET TO THE TORRID ZONE

"Pathway of light! o'er thy empurpled zone
With lavish charms perennial summer strays;
Soft 'midst thy spicy groves the zephyr plays,

While far around the rich perfumes are thrown:
The amadavid bird for thee alone
Spreads his gay plumes, that catch thy vivid rays;
For thee the gems with liquid lustre blaze,
And Nature's various wealth is all thy own.
But, ah! not thine is twilight's doubtful gloom,
Those mild gradations, mingling day with night;
Here instant darkness shrouds thy genial bloom,
Nor leaves my pensive soul that lingering light,
When musing memory would each trace resume
Of fading pleasures in successive flight."

There were, however, some days in the year celebrated by Paul and Virginia in a more peculiar manner: these were the birthdays of their mothers. Virginia never failed the day before to prepare some wheaten cakes, which she distributed among a few poor white families, born in the island, who had never eaten European bread. These unfortunate people, uncared for by the blacks, were reduced to live on tapioca in the woods; and as they had neither the insensibility which is the result of slavery, nor the fortitude which springs from a liberal education, to enable them to support their poverty, their situation was deplorable. These cakes were all that Virginia had it in her power to give away; but she conferred the gift in so delicate a manner as to add tenfold to its value. In the first place, Paul was commissioned to take the cakes himself to these families, and get their promise to come and spend the next day at Madame de la Tour's. Accordingly, mothers of families, with two or three thin, yellow, miserable-looking daughters, so timid that they dared not look up, made their appearance. Virginia soon put them at their ease; she waited upon them with refreshments, the excellence of which she endeavoured to heighten by relating some particular circumstance which, in her own estimation, vastly improved them. One beverage had been prepared by Margaret; another, by her mother: her brother himself had climbed some lofty tree for the very

fruit she was presenting. She would then get Paul to dance with them, nor would she leave them till she saw that they were happy. She wished them to partake of the joy of her own family. "It is only," she said, "by promoting the happiness of others that we can secure our own." When they left, she generally presented them with some little article they seemed to fancy, enforcing their acceptance of it by some delicate pretext, that she might not appear to know they were in want. If she remarked that their clothes were much tattered, she obtained her mother's permission to give them some of her own, and then sent Paul to leave them secretly at their cottage doors. She thus followed the divine precept—concealing the benefactor, and revealing only the benefit.

You Europeans, whose minds are imbued from infancy with prejudices at variance with happiness, can not imagine all the instruction and pleasure to be derived from Nature. Your souls, confined to a small sphere of intelligence, soon reach the limit of its artificial enjoyments; but Nature and the heart are inexhaustible. Paul and Virginia had neither clock, nor almanac, nor books of chronology, history, or philosophy. The periods of their lives were regulated by those of the operations of Nature, and their familiar conversation had a constant reference to the changes of the seasons. They knew the time of day by the shadows of the trees; the seasons, by the times when those trees bore flowers or fruit; and the years, by the number of their harvests. These soothing images diffused an inexpressible charm over their conversation. "It is time to dine," said Virginia; "the shadows of the plantain-trees are at their roots;" or, "Night approaches; the tamarinds are closing their leaves." "When will you come and see us?" inquired some of her companions in the neighbourhood. "At the time of the sugar-canes," answered Virginia.

"Your visit will be then still more delightful," resumed her young acquaintances. When she was asked what was her own age, and that of Paul—"My brother," said she, "is as old as the great cocoa-tree of the fountain; and I am as old as the little one; the mangoes have borne fruit twelve times, and the orange-trees have flowered four-and-twenty times, since I came into the world." Their lives seemed linked to that of the trees, like those of Fauns or Dryads. They knew no other historical epochs than those of the lives of their mothers, no other chronology than that of their orchards, and no other philosophy than that of doing good, and resigning themselves to the will of Heaven.

What need, indeed, had these young people of riches or learning such as ours? Even their necessities and their ignorance increased their happiness. No day passed in which they were not of some service to one another, or in which they did not mutually impart some instruction. Yes, instruction; for if errors mingled with it, they were at least not of a dangerous character. A pure-minded being has none of that description to fear. Thus grew these children of Nature. No care had troubled their peace, no intemperance had corrupted their blood, no misplaced passion had depraved their hearts. Love, innocence, and piety possessed their souls; and those intellectual graces were unfolding daily in their features, their attitudes, and their movements. Still in the morning of life, they had all its blooming freshness; and surely such in the garden of Eden appeared our first parents, when, coming from the hands of God, they first saw and approached each other, and conversed together, like brother and sister. Virginia was gentle, modest, and confiding as Eve; and Paul, like Adam, united the stature of manhood with the simplicity of a child.

Sometimes, if alone with Virginia, he has a thousand times told me, he used to say to her, on his return from labour: "When I am wearied, the sight of you refreshes me. If from the summit of the mountain I perceive you below in the valley, you appear to me in the midst of our orchard like a blooming rose-bud. If you go toward our mothers' house, the partridge, when it runs to meet its young, has a shape less beautiful and a step less light. When I lose sight of you through the trees, I have no need to see you in order to find you again. Something of you, I know not how, remains for me in the air through which you have passed—on the grass whereon you have been seated. When I come near you, you delight all my senses. The azure of the sky is less charming than the blue of your eyes, and the song of the amadauid bird less soft than the sound of your voice. If I only touch you with the tip of my finger, my whole frame trembles with pleasure. Do you remember the day when we crossed over the great stones of the river of the Three Breasts? I was very tired before we reached the bank; but as soon as I had taken you in my arms, I seemed to have wings like a bird. Tell me by what charm you have thus enchanted me? Is it by your wisdom? Our mothers have more than either of us. Is it by your caresses? They embrace me much oftener than you. I think it must be by your goodness. I shall never forget how you walked barefooted to the Black River, to ask pardon for the poor runaway slave. Here, my beloved, take this flowering branch of a lemon-tree, which I have gathered in the forest; you will let it remain at night near your bed. Eat this honeycomb too, which I have taken for you from the top of a rock. But first lean on my bosom, and I shall be refreshed."

Virginia would answer him: "Oh, my dear brother, the rays of the sun in the morning on the tops of the

rocks give me less joy than the sight of you. I love my mother—I love yours; but when they call you their son, I love them a thousand times more. When they caress you, I feel it more sensibly than when I am caressed myself. You ask me what makes you love me. Why, all the creatures that are brought up together love one another. Look at our birds: reared up in the same nests, they love each other as we do; they are always together like us. Hark! how they call and answer from one tree to another! So when the echoes bring to my ears the air which you play on your flute on the top of the mountain, I repeat the words at the bottom of the valley. You are dear to me more especially since the day when you wanted to fight the master of the slave for me. Since that time how often have I said to myself: ‘Ah, my brother has a good heart; but for him, I should have died of terror.’ I pray to God every day for my mother and for yours; for you, and for our poor servants: but when I pronounce your name, my devotion seems to increase—I ask so earnestly of God that no harm may befall you! Why do you go so far and climb so high, to seek fruits and flowers for me? Have we not enough in our garden already? How much you are fatigued—you look so warm!”—and with her little white handkerchief she would wipe the damps from his face, and then imprint a tender kiss on his forehead.

For some time past, however, Virginia had felt her heart agitated by new sensations. Her beautiful blue eyes lost their lustre, her cheek its freshness, and her frame was overpowered with a universal languor. Serenity no longer sat upon her brow, nor smiles played upon her lips. She would become all at once gay without cause for joy, and melancholy without any subject for grief. She fled her innocent amusements, her gentle toils, and even the society of her beloved family; wandering about the most

unfrequented parts of the plantations, and seeking everywhere the rest which she could nowhere find. Sometimes, at the sight of Paul, she would advance sportively to meet him; but, when about to accost him, was overcome by a sudden confusion; her pale cheeks were covered with blushes, and her eyes no longer dared to meet those of her brother. Paul said to her, "The rocks are covered with verdure, our birds begin to sing when you approach, everything around you is gay, and you only are unhappy." He then endeavoured to soothe her by his embraces; but she turned away her head, and fled, trembling, toward her mother. The caresses of her brother excited too much emotion in her agitated heart, and she sought in the arms of her mother refuge from herself. Paul, unused to the secret windings of the female heart, vexed himself in vain in endeavouring to comprehend the meaning of these new and strange caprices. Misfortunes seldom come alone, and a serious calamity now impended over these families.

One of those summers which sometimes desolate the countries situated between the tropics, now began to spread its ravages over this island. It was near the end of December, when the sun, in Capricorn, darts over the Mauritius, during the space of three weeks, its vertical fires. The southeast wind, which prevails throughout almost the whole year, no longer blew. Vast columns of dust arose from the highways, and hung suspended in the air; the ground was everywhere broken into clefts; the grass was burned up; hot exhalations issued from the sides of the mountains, and their rivulets, for the most part, became dry. No refreshing cloud ever arose from the sea; fiery vapours only, during the day, ascended from the plains, and appeared, at sunset, like the reflection of a vast conflagration. Night brought no coolness to the heated atmosphere: and the red moon, rising in the misty horizon,

appeared of supernatural magnitude. The drooping cattle, on the sides of the hills, stretching out their necks toward heaven, and panting for breath, made the valleys re-echo with their melancholy lowing: even the Caffre by whom they were led threw himself upon the earth, in search of some cooling moisture, but his hopes were vain; the scorching sun had penetrated the whole soil, and the stifling atmosphere everywhere resounded with the buzzing noise of insects, seeking to allay their thirst with the blood of men and of animals.

During this sultry season, Virginia's restlessness and disquietude were much increased. One night in particular, being unable to sleep, she arose from her bed, sat down, and returned to rest again; but could find in no attitude either slumber or repose. At length she bent her way, by the light of the moon, toward her fountain, and gazed at its spring, which, notwithstanding the drought, still trickled in silver threads down the brown sides of the rock. She flung herself into the basin; its coolness reanimated her spirits, and a thousand soothing remembrances came to her mind. She recollected that in her infancy her mother and Margaret had amused themselves by bathing her with Paul in this very spot; that he afterward, reserving this bath for her sole use, had hollowed out its bed, covered the bottom with sand, and sown aromatic herbs around its borders. She saw in the water, upon her naked arms and bosom, the reflection of the two cocoa-trees which were planted at her own and her brother's birth, and which interwove above her head their green branches and young fruit. She thought of Paul's friendship, sweeter than the odour of the blossoms, purer than the waters of the fountain, stronger than the intertwining palm-trees, and she sighed. Reflecting on the hour of the night, and the profound solitude, her imagina-

tion became disturbed. Suddenly she flew, affrighted, from those dangerous shades, and those waters which seemed to her hotter than the tropical sunbeams, and ran to her mother for refuge. More than once, wishing to reveal her sufferings, she pressed her mother's hand within her own; more than once she was ready to pronounce the name of Paul; but her oppressed heart left her lips no power of utterance, and, leaning her head on her mother's bosom, she bathed it with her tears.

Madame de la Tour, though she easily discerned the source of her daughter's uneasiness, did not think proper to speak to her on the subject. "My dear child," said she, "offer up your supplications to God, who disposes at his will of health and of life. He subjects you to trial now, in order to recompense you hereafter. Remember that we are only placed upon earth for the exercise of virtue."

The excessive heat in the meantime raised vast masses of vapour from the ocean, which hung over the island like an immense parasol, and gathered round the summits of the mountains. Long flakes of fire issued from time to time from these mist-embosomed peaks. The most awful thunder soon after re-echoed through the woods, the plains, and the valleys: the rain fell from the skies in cataracts; foaming torrents rushed down the sides of this mountain; the bottom of the valley became a sea, and the elevated platform on which the cottages were built, a little island. The accumulated waters, having no other outlet, rushed with violence through the narrow gorge which leads into the valley, tossing and roaring, and bearing along with them a mingled wreck of soil, trees, and rocks.

The trembling families meantime addressed their prayers to God all together in the cottage of Madame de la Tour, the roof of which cracked fearfully from the force of the winds. So incessant and vivid were the lightnings,

that although the doors and window-shutters were securely fastened, every object without could be distinctly seen through the joints in the wood-work. Paul, followed by Domingo, went with intrepidity from one cottage to another, notwithstanding the fury of the tempest; here supporting a partition with a buttress, there driving in a stake; and only returning to the family to calm their fears by the expression of a hope that the storm was passing away. Accordingly, in the evening, the rain ceased, the trade-winds of the southeast pursued their ordinary course, the tempestuous clouds were driven away to the northward, and the setting sun appeared in the horizon.

Virginia's first wish was to visit the spot called her Resting-place. Paul approached her with a timid air, and offered her the assistance of his arm; she accepted it with a smile, and they left the cottage together. The air was clear and fresh; white vapours arose from the ridges of the mountain, which was furrowed here and there by the courses of torrents, marked in foam, and now beginning to dry up on all sides. As for the garden, it was completely torn to pieces by deep water-courses, the roots of most of the fruit-trees were laid bare, and vast heaps of sand covered the borders of the meadows, and had choked up Virginia's bath. The two cocoa-trees, however, were still erect, and still retained their freshness; but they were no longer surrounded by turf, or arbours, or birds, except a few amadavid birds, which, upon the points of the neighbouring rocks, were lamenting, in plaintive notes, the loss of their young.

At the sight of this general desolation, Virginia exclaimed to Paul: "You brought birds hither, and the hurricane has killed them. You planted this garden, and it is now destroyed. Everything then upon earth perishes, and it is only heaven that is not subject to change."—

"Why," answered Paul, "can not I give you something that belongs to heaven? but I have nothing of my own, even upon the earth." Virginia with a blush replied, "You have the picture of Saint Paul." As soon as she had uttered the words, he flew in quest of it to his mother's cottage. This picture was a miniature of Paul the Hermit, which Margaret, who viewed it with feelings of great devotion, had worn at her neck while a girl, and which, after she became a mother, she had placed round her child's. It had even happened, that being, while pregnant, abandoned by all the world, and continually occupied in contemplating the image of this benevolent recluse, her offspring had contracted some resemblance to this revered object. She therefore bestowed upon him the name of Paul, giving him for his patron a saint who had passed his life far from mankind, by whom he had been first deceived, and then forsaken. Virginia, on receiving this little present from the hands of Paul, said to him, with emotion: "My dear brother, I will never part with this while I live; nor will I ever forget that you have given me the only thing you have in the world." At this tone of friendship, this unhoped-for return of familiarity and tenderness, Paul attempted to embrace her; but, light as a bird, she escaped him, and fled away, leaving him astonished, and unable to account for conduct so extraordinary.

Meanwhile, Margaret said to Madame de la Tour: "Why do we not unite our children by marriage? They have a strong attachment for each other, and though my son hardly understands the real nature of his feelings, yet great care and watchfulness will be necessary. Under such circumstances it will be as well not to leave them too much together." Madame de la Tour replied: "They are too young and too poor. What grief would it occasion us to see Virginia bring into the world unfortunate chil-

dren whom she would not perhaps have sufficient strength to rear! Your negro, Domingo, is almost too old to labour; Mary is infirm. As for myself, my dear friend, at the end of fifteen years I find my strength greatly decreased; the feebleness of age advances rapidly in hot climates, and, above all, under the pressure of misfortune. Paul is our only hope; let us wait till he comes to maturity, and his increased strength enables him to support us by his labour. At present you well know that we have only sufficient to supply the wants of the day; but were we to send Paul for a short time to the Indies, he might acquire, by commerce, the means of purchasing some slaves; and at his return we could unite him to Virginia, for I am persuaded no one on earth would render her so happy as your son. We will consult our neighbour on this subject."

They accordingly asked my advice, which was in accordance with Madame de la Tour's opinion. "The Indian seas," I observed to them, "are calm, and, in choosing a favourable time of the year, the voyage out is seldom longer than six weeks; and the same time may be allowed for the return home. We will furnish Paul with a little venture from my neighbourhood, where he is much beloved. If we were only to supply him with some raw cotton, of which we make no use for want of mills to work it, some ebony, which is here so common that it serves us for firing, and some rosin, which is found in our woods, he would be able to sell those articles, though useless here, to good advantage in the Indies."

I took upon myself to obtain permission from Monsieur de la Bourdonnais to undertake this voyage: and I determined previously to mention the affair to Paul. But what was my surprise, when this young man said to me, with a degree of good sense above his age: "And why

do you wish me to leave my family for this precarious pursuit of Fortune? Is there any commerce in the world more advantageous than the culture of the ground, which yields sometimes fifty or a hundred fold? If we wish to engage in commerce, can we not do so by carrying our superfluities to the town, without my wandering to the Indies? Our mothers tell me that Domingo is old and feeble; but I am young, and gather strength every day. If any accident should happen during my absence, above all, to Virginia, who already suffers— Oh, no, no!—I can not resolve to leave them.”

So decided an answer threw me into great perplexity, for Madame de la Tour had not concealed from me the cause of Virginia’s illness and want of spirits, and her desire of separating these young people till they were a few years older. I took care, however, not to drop anything which could lead Paul to suspect the existence of these motives.

About this period a ship from France brought Madame de la Tour a letter from her aunt. The fear of death, without which hearts as insensible as hers would never feel, had alarmed her into compassion. When she wrote, she was recovering from a dangerous illness, which had, however, left her incurably languid and weak. She desired her niece to return to France; or, if her health forbade her to undertake so long a voyage, she begged her to send Virginia, on whom she promised to bestow a good education, to procure for her a splendid marriage, and to leave her heiress of her whole fortune. She concluded by enjoining strict obedience to her will, in gratitude, she said, for her great kindness.

At the perusal of this letter general consternation spread itself through the whole assembled party. Domingo and Mary began to weep. Paul, motionless with surprise,

appeared almost ready to burst with indignation; while Virginia, fixing her eyes anxiously upon her mother, had not power to utter a single word. "And can you now leave us?" cried Margaret to Madame de la Tour.—"No, my dear friend, no, my beloved children," replied Madame de la Tour; "I will never leave you. I have lived with you, and with you I will die. I have known no happiness but in your affection. If my health be deranged, my past misfortunes are the cause. My heart has been deeply wounded by the cruelty of my relations, and by the loss of my beloved husband. But I have since found more consolation and more real happiness with you, in these humble huts, than all the wealth of my family could now lead me to expect in my own country."

At this soothing language, every eye overflowed with tears of delight. Paul, pressing Madame de la Tour in his arms, exclaimed: "Neither will I leave you! I will not go to the Indies. We will all labour for you, dear mamma: and you shall never feel any want with us." But of the whole society the person who displayed the least transport, and who probably felt the most, was Virginia; and during the remainder of the day the gentle gaiety which flowed from her heart, and proved that her peace of mind was restored, completed the general satisfaction.

At sunrise the next day, just as they had concluded offering up, as usual, their morning prayer before breakfast, Domingo came to inform them that a gentleman on horseback, followed by two slaves, was coming toward the plantation. It was Monsieur de la Bourdonnais. He entered the cottage, where he found the family at breakfast. Virginia had prepared, according to the custom of the country, coffee, and rice boiled in water. To these she had added hot yams and fresh plantains. The leaves of the plantain-tree supplied the want of table linen; and calabash

shells, split in two, served for cups. The governor exhibited at first some astonishment at the homeliness of the dwelling; then, addressing himself to Madame de la Tour, he observed, that although public affairs drew his attention too much from the concerns of individuals, she had many claims on his good offices. "You have an aunt at Paris, madam," he added, "a woman of quality, and immensely rich, who expects that you will hasten to see her, and who means to bestow upon you her whole fortune." Madame de la Tour replied that the state of her health would not permit her to undertake so long a voyage. "At least," resumed Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, "you can not, without injustice, deprive this amiable young lady, your daughter, of so noble an inheritance. I will not conceal from you that your aunt has made use of her influence to secure your daughter being sent to her; and that I have received official letters, in which I am ordered to exert my authority, if necessary, to that effect. But as I only wish to employ my power for the purpose of rendering the inhabitants of this country happy, I expect from your good sense the voluntary sacrifice of a few years, upon which your daughter's establishment in the world and the welfare of your whole life depend. Wherefore do we come to these islands? Is it not to acquire a fortune? And will it not be more agreeable to return, and find it in your own country?"

He then took a large bag of piastres from one of his slaves, and placed it upon the table. "This sum," he continued, "is allotted by your aunt to defray the outlay necessary for the equipment of the young lady for her voyage." Gently reproaching Madame de la Tour for not having had recourse to him in her difficulties, he extolled at the same time her noble fortitude. Upon this Paul said to the governor, "My mother did apply to you, sir, and

you received her ill.”—“Have you another child, madam?” said Monsieur de la Bourdonnais to Madame de la Tour. “No, sir,” she replied; “this is the son of my friend; but he and Virginia are equally dear to us, and we mutually consider them both as our own children.”—“Young man,” said the governor to Paul, “when you have acquired a little more experience of the world, you will know that it is the misfortune of people in place to be deceived, and to bestow, in consequence, upon intriguing vice, that which they would wish to give to modest merit.”

Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, at the request of Madame de la Tour, placed himself next to her at table, and breakfasted, after the manner of the creoles, upon coffee, mixed with rice boiled in water. He was delighted with the order and cleanliness which prevailed in the little cottage, the harmony of the two interesting families, and the zeal of their old servants. “Here,” he exclaimed, “I discern only wooden furniture, but I find serene countenances and hearts of gold.” Paul, enchanted with the affability of the governor, said to him: “I wish to be your friend; for you are a good man.” Monsieur de la Bourdonnais received with pleasure this insular compliment, and, taking Paul by the hand, assured him that he might rely on his friendship.

After breakfast he took Madame de la Tour aside, and informed her that an opportunity would soon offer itself of sending her daughter to France, in a ship which was going to sail in a short time; that he would put her under the charge of a lady, one of the passengers, who was a relation of his own; and that she must not think of renouncing an immense fortune on account of the pain of being separated from her daughter for a brief interval. “Your aunt,” he added, “can not live more than two years;

of this I am assured by her friends. Think of it seriously. Fortune does not visit us every day. Consult your friends. I am sure that every person of good sense will be of my opinion." She answered "that, as she desired no other happiness henceforth in the world than in promoting that of her daughter, she hoped to be allowed to leave her departure for France entirely to her own inclination."

Madame de la Tour was not sorry to find an opportunity of separating Paul and Virginia for a short time, and provide, by this means, for their mutual felicity at a future period. She took her daughter aside and said to her: "My dear child, our servants are now old. Paul is still very young; Margaret is advanced in years, and I am already infirm. If I should die, what would become of you without fortune, in the midst of these deserts? You would then be left alone, without any person who could afford you much assistance, and would be obliged to labour without ceasing, as a hired servant, in order to support your wretched existence. This idea overcomes me with sorrow." Virginia answered: "God has appointed us to labour, and to bless him every day. Up to this time he has never forsaken us, and he never will forsake us in time to come. His providence watches most especially over the unfortunate. You have told me this very often, my dear mother! I can not resolve to leave you." Madame de la Tour replied, with much emotion: "I have no other aim than to render you happy, and to marry you one day to Paul, who is not really your brother. Remember, then, that his fortune depends upon you."

A young girl who is in love believes that every one else is ignorant of her passion—she throws over her eyes the veil with which she covers the feelings of her heart; but when it is once lifted by a friendly hand, the hidden sorrows of her attachment escape as through a newly-

opened barrier, and the sweet outpourings of unrestrained confidence succeed to her former mystery and reserve. Virginia, deeply affected by this new proof of her mother's tenderness, related to her the cruel struggles she had undergone, of which Heaven alone had been witness: she saw, she said, the hand of Providence in the assistance of an affectionate mother, who approved of her attachment, and would guide her by her counsels; and as she was now strengthened by such support, every consideration led her to remain with her mother, without anxiety for the present, and without apprehension for the future.

Madame de la Tour, perceiving that this confidential conversation had produced an effect altogether different from that which she expected, said: "My dear child, I do not wish to constrain you; think over it at leisure, but conceal your affection from Paul. It is better not to let a man know that the heart of his mistress is gained."

Virginia and her mother were sitting together by themselves the same evening, when a tall man, dressed in a blue cassock, entered their cottage. He was a missionary priest, and the confessor of Madame de la Tour and her daughter, who had now been sent to them by the governor. "My children," he exclaimed as he entered, "God be praised! you are now rich. You can now attend to the kind suggestions of your benevolent hearts, and do good to the poor. I know what Monsieur de la Bourdonnais has said to you, and what you have said in reply. Your health, dear madam, obliges you to remain here; but you, young lady, are without excuse. We must obey the direction of Providence; and we must also obey our aged relations, even when they are unjust. A sacrifice is required of you; but it is the will of God. Our Lord devoted himself for you; and you, in imitation of his example, must give up something for the welfare of your family. Your voyage to

France will end happily. You will surely consent to go, my dear young lady."

Virginia, with downcast eyes, answered, trembling: "If it is the command of God, I will not presume to oppose it. Let the will of God be done!" As she uttered these words, she wept.

The priest went away, in order to inform the governor of the success of his mission. In the meantime Madame de la Tour sent Domingo to request me to come to her, that she might consult me respecting Virginia's departure. I was not at all of opinion that she ought to go. I consider it as a fixed principle of happiness that we ought to prefer the advantages of Nature to those of fortune, and never go in search of that at a distance which we may find at home—in our own bosoms. But what could be expected from my advice, in opposition to the illusions of a splendid fortune?—or from my simple reasoning, when in competition with the prejudices of the world, and an authority held sacred by Madame de la Tour? This lady, indeed, had only consulted me out of politeness; she had ceased to deliberate since she had heard the decision of her confessor. Margaret herself, who, notwithstanding the advantages she expected for her son from the possession of Virginia's fortune, had hitherto opposed her departure, made no further objections. As for Paul, in ignorance of what had been determined, but alarmed at the secret conversations which Virginia had been holding with her mother, he abandoned himself to melancholy. "They are plotting something against me," cried he, "for they conceal everything from me."

A report having in the meantime been spread in the island that fortune had visited these rocks, merchants of every description were seen climbing their steep ascent. Now, for the first time, were seen displayed in these hum-

ble huts the richest stuffs of India; the fine dimity of Gondelore; the handkerchiefs of Pellicate and Masulipatan; the plain, striped, and embroidered muslins of Dacca, so beautifully transparent; the delicately white cottons of Surat, and linens of all colours. They also brought with them the gorgeous silks of China; satin damasks, some white, and others grass-green and bright red; pink taffetas, with a profusion of satins and gauze of Tonquin, both plain and decorated with flowers; soft pekins, downy as cloth; with white and yellow nankeens, and the calicoes of Madagascar.

Madame de la Tour wished her daughter to purchase whatever she liked; she only examined the goods, and inquired the price, to take care that the dealers did not cheat her. Virginia made choice of everything she thought would be useful or agreeable to her mother, or to Margaret and her son. "This," said she, "will be wanted for furnishing the cottage, and that will be very useful to Mary and Domingo." In short, the bag of piastres was almost emptied before she even began to consider her own wants; and she was obliged to receive back for her own use a share of the presents which she had distributed among the family circle.

Paul, overcome with sorrow at the sight of these gifts of fortune, which he felt were a presage of Virginia's departure, came a few days after to my dwelling. With an air of deep despondency he said to me: "My sister is going away; she is already making preparations for her voyage. I conjure you to come and exert your influence over her mother and mine in order to detain her here." I could not refuse the young man's solicitations, although well convinced that my representations would be unavailing.

Virginia had ever appeared to me charming, when clad

in the coarse cloth of Bengal, with a red handkerchief tied round her head: you may therefore imagine how much her beauty was increased when she was attired in the graceful and elegant costume worn by the ladies of this country! She had on a white muslin dress, lined with pink taffeta. Her somewhat tall and slender figure was shown to advantage in her new attire, and the simple arrangement of her hair accorded admirably with the form of her head. Her fine blue eyes were filled with an expression of melancholy; and the struggles of passion, with which her heart was agitated, imparted a flush to her cheek, and to her voice a tone of deep emotion. The contrast between her pensive look and her gay habiliments rendered her more interesting than ever, nor was it possible to see or hear her unmoved. Paul became more and more melancholy; and at length Margaret, distressed at the situation of her son, took him aside, and said to him: "Why, my dear child, will you cherish vain hopes, which will only render your disappointment more bitter? It is time for me to make known to you the secret of your life and of mine. Mademoiselle de la Tour belongs, by her mother's side, to a rich and noble family, while you are but the son of a poor peasant girl; and, what is worse, you are illegitimate."

Paul, who had never heard this last expression before, inquired with eagerness its meaning. His mother replied: "I was not married to your father. When I was a girl, seduced by love, I was guilty of a weakness of which you are the offspring. The consequence of my fault is, that you are deprived of the protection of a father's family, and by my flight from home you have also lost that of your mother's. Unfortunate child! you have no relation in the world but me!"—and she shed a flood of tears. Paul, pressing her in his arms, exclaimed: "Oh, my dear mother! since I have no relation in the world but you, I will love

you all the more. But what a secret have you just disclosed to me! I now see the reason why Mademoiselle de la Tour has estranged herself so much from me for the last two months, and why she has determined to go to France. Ah! I perceive too well that she despises me!"

The hour of supper being arrived, we gathered round the table; but the different sensations with which we were agitated left us little inclination to eat, and the meal, if such it may be called, passed in silence. Virginia was the first to rise; she went out and seated herself on the very spot where we now are. Paul hastened after her, and sat down by her side. Both of them, for some time, kept a profound silence. It was one of those delicious nights which are so common between the tropics, and to the beauty of which no pencil can do justice. The moon appeared in the midst of the firmament, surrounded by a curtain of clouds, which was gradually unfolded by her beams. Her light insensibly spread itself over the mountains of the island, and their distant peaks glistened with a silvery green. The winds were perfectly still. We heard among the woods, at the bottom of the valleys, and on the summits of the rocks, the piping cries and the soft notes of the birds, wantoning in their nests, and rejoicing in the brightness of the night and the serenity of the atmosphere. The hum of insects was heard in the grass. The stars sparkled in the heavens, and their lucid orbs were reflected, in trembling sparkles, from the tranquil bosom of the ocean. Virginia's eyes wandered distractedly over its vast and gloomy horizon, distinguishable from the shore of the island only by the red fires in the fishing-boats. She perceived at the entrance of the harbour a light and a shadow; these were the watchlight and the hull of the vessel in which she was to embark for Europe, and which, all ready for sea, lay at anchor, waiting for a breeze. Affected at

this sight, she turned away her head, in order to hide her tears from Paul.

Madame de la Tour, Margaret, and I were seated at a little distance beneath the plantain-trees; and owing to the stillness of the night we distinctly heard their conversation, which I have not forgotten.

Paul said to her: "You are going away from us, they tell me, in three days. You do not fear then to encounter the dangers of the sea, at the sight of which you are so much terrified?"—"I must perform my duty," answered Virginia, "by obeying my parent."—"You leave us," resumed Paul, "for a distant relation, whom you have never seen."—"Alas!" cried Virginia, "I would have remained here my whole life, but my mother would not have it so. My confessor, too, told me it was the will of God that I should go, and that life was a scene of trials!—and, oh! this is indeed a severe one."

"What!" exclaimed Paul, "you could find so many reasons for going, and not one for remaining here! Ah! there is one reason for your departure that you have not mentioned. Riches have great attractions. You will soon find in the new world to which you are going, another, to whom you will give the name of brother, which you bestow on me no more. You will choose that brother from among persons who are worthy of you by their birth, and by a fortune which I have not to offer. But where can you go to be happier? On what shore will you land, and find it dearer to you than the spot which gave you birth?—and where will you form around you a society more delightful to you than this, by which you are so much beloved? How will you bear to live without your mother's caresses, to which you are so accustomed? What will become of her, already advanced in years, when she no longer sees you at her side at table, in the house, in the

walks, where she used to lean upon you? What will become of my mother, who loves you with the same affection? What shall I say to comfort them when I see them weeping for your absence? Cruel Virginia! I say nothing to you of myself; but what will become of me, when in the morning I shall no more see you; when the evening will come, and not reunite us?—when I shall gaze on these two palm-trees, planted at our birth, and so long the witnesses of our mutual friendship? Ah! since your lot is changed, since you seek in a far country other possessions than the fruits of my labour, let me go with you in the vessel in which you are about to embark. I will sustain your spirits in the midst of those tempests which terrify you so much, even on shore. I will lay my head upon your bosom; I will warm your heart upon my own; and in France, where you are going in search of fortune and of grandeur, I will wait upon you as your slave. Happy only in your happiness, you will find me in those palaces where I shall see you receiving the homage and adoration of all, rich and noble enough to make you the greatest of all sacrifices, by dying at your feet.”

The violence of his emotions stopped his utterance, and we then heard Virginia, who, in a voice broken by sobs, uttered these words: “It is for you that I go—for you, whom I see tired to death every day by the labour of sustaining two helpless families. If I have accepted this opportunity of becoming rich, it is only to return a thousandfold the good which you have done us. Can any fortune be equal to your friendship? Why do you talk about your birth? Ah! if it were possible for me still to have a brother, should I make choice of any other than you? Oh, Paul! Paul! you are far dearer to me than a brother; how much has it cost me to repulse you from me? Help me to tear myself from what I value more than existence

till Heaven shall bless our union. But I will stay or go—I will live or die; dispose of me as you will. Unhappy that I am! I could have repelled your caresses, but I can not support your affliction.”

At these words Paul seized her in his arms, and, holding her pressed close to his bosom, cried, in a piercing tone, “I will go with her—nothing shall ever part us!” We all ran toward him; and Madame de la Tour said to him, “My son, if you go, what will become of us?”

He, trembling, repeated after her the words: “My son!—my son! You my mother!” cried he; “you, who would separate the brother from the sister! We have both been nourished at your bosom; we have both been reared upon your knees; we have learned of you to love one another; we have said so a thousand times; and now you would separate her from me!—you would send her to Europe, that inhospitable country which refused you an asylum, and to relations by whom you were yourself abandoned. You will tell me that I have no right over her, and that she is not my sister. She is everything to me—my riches, my birth, my family—all that I have! I know no other. We have had but one roof, one cradle, and we will have but one grave! If she goes, I will follow her. The governor will prevent me! Will he prevent me from flinging myself into the sea?—will he prevent me from following her by swimming? The sea can not be more fatal to me than the land. Since I can not live with her, at least I will die before her eyes, far from you. Inhuman mother!—woman without compassion!—may the ocean, to which you trust her, restore her to you no more! May the waves, rolling back our bodies amid the shingles of this beach, give you, in the loss of your two children, an eternal subject of remorse!”

At these words I seized him in my arms, for despair

had deprived him of reason. His eyes sparkled with fire, the perspiration fell in great drops from his face; his knees trembled, and I felt his heart beat violently against his burning bosom.

Virginia, alarmed, said to him: "Oh, my dear Paul, I call to witness the pleasures of our early age, your griefs and my own, and everything that can forever bind two unfortunate beings to each other, that if I remain at home, I will live but for you; that if I go, I will one day return to be yours. I call you all to witness—you who have reared me from my infancy, who dispose of my life and who see my tears. I swear by that Heaven which hears me, by the sea which I am going to pass, by the air I breathe, and which I never sullied by a falsehood."

As the sun softens and precipitates an icy rock from the summit of one of the Apennines, so the impetuous passions of the young man were subdued by the voice of her he loved. He bent his head, and a torrent of tears fell from his eyes. His mother, mingling her tears with his, held him in her arms, but was unable to speak. Madame de la Tour, half distracted, said to me: "I can bear this no longer. My heart is quite broken. This unfortunate voyage shall not take place. Do take my son home with you. Not one of us has had any rest the whole week."

I said to Paul: "My dear friend, your sister shall remain here. To-morrow we will talk to the governor about it; leave your family to take some rest, and come and pass the night with me. It is late; it is midnight; the Southern Cross is just above the horizon."

He suffered himself to be led away in silence: and, after a night of great agitation, he arose at break of day, and returned home.

But why should I continue any longer to you the re-

cital of this history? There is but one aspect of human existence which we can ever contemplate with pleasure. Like the globe upon which we revolve, the fleeting course of our life is but a day; and if one part of that day be visited by light, the other is thrown into darkness.

"My father," I answered, "finish, I conjure you, the history which you have begun in a manner so interesting. If the images of happiness are the most pleasing, those of misfortune are more instructive. Tell me what became of the unhappy young man."

The first object beheld by Paul in his way home was the negro woman Mary, who, mounted on a rock, was earnestly looking toward the sea. As soon as he perceived her, he called to her from a distance, "Where is Virginia?" Mary turned her head toward her young master, and began to weep. Paul, distracted, retracing his steps, ran to the harbour. He was there informed that Virginia had embarked at break of day, and that the vessel had immediately set sail, and was now out of sight. He instantly returned to the plantation, which he crossed without uttering a word.

Quite perpendicular as appears the wall of rocks behind us, those green platforms which separate their summits are so many stages, by means of which you may reach, through some difficult paths, that cone of sloping and inaccessible rocks which is called The Thumb. At the foot of that cone is an extended slope of ground, covered with lofty trees, and so steep and elevated that it looks like a forest in the air, surrounded by tremendous precipices. The clouds, which are constantly attracted round the summit of The Thumb, supply innumerable rivulets, which fall to so great a depth in the valley situated on the other side of the mountain, that from this elevated point the sound of their cataracts can not be heard. From that

spot you can discern a considerable part of the island, diversified by precipices and mountain peaks, and, among others, Peter-Booth and the Three Breasts, with their valleys full of woods. You also command an extensive view of the ocean, and can even perceive the Isle of Bourbon, forty leagues to the westward. From the summit of that stupendous pile of rocks Paul caught sight of the vessel which was bearing away Virginia, and which now, ten leagues out at sea, appeared like a black spot in the midst of the ocean. He remained a great part of the day with his eyes fixed upon this object: when it had disappeared, he still fancied he beheld it; and when, at length, the traces which clung to his imagination were lost in the mists of the horizon, he seated himself on that wild point, forever beaten by the winds, which never cease to agitate the tops of the cabbage and gum trees, and the hoarse and moaning murmurs of which, similar to the distant sound of organs, inspire a profound melancholy. On this spot I found him, his head reclined on the rock, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. I had followed him from the earliest dawn, and, after much importunity, I prevailed on him to descend from the heights and return to his family. I went home with him, where the first impulse of his mind, on seeing Madame de la Tour, was to reproach her bitterly for having deceived him. She told us that a favourable wind having sprung up at three o'clock in the morning, and the vessel being ready to sail, the governor, attended by some of his staff and the missionary, had come with a palanquin to fetch her daughter; and that, notwithstanding Virginia's objections, her own tears and entreaties, and the lamentations of Margaret, everybody exclaiming all the time that it was for the general welfare, they had carried her away almost dying. "At least," cried Paul, "if I had bid her farewell, I should now be more calm. I

would have said to her, 'Virginia, if, during the time we have lived together, one word may have escaped me which has offended you, before you leave me forever, tell me that you forgive me.' I would have said to her: 'Since I am destined to see you no more, farewell, my dear Virginia, farewell! Live far from me, contented and happy!'" When he saw that his mother and Madame de la Tour were weeping, "You must now," said he, "seek some other hand to wipe away your tears"; and then, rushing out of the house, and groaning aloud, he wandered up and down the plantation. He hovered in particular about all those spots which had once been most endeared to Virginia. He said to the goats and their little ones, which followed him bleating: "What do you want of me? You will see with me no more her who used to feed you with her own hand." He went to the bower called Virginia's Resting-place, and, as the birds flew around him, exclaimed: "Poor birds! you will fly no more to meet her who cherished you!"—and, observing Fidele running backward and forward in search of her, he heaved a deep sigh, and cried, "Ah! you will never find her again." At length he went and seated himself upon the rock where he had conversed with her the preceding evening; and at the sight of the ocean, upon which he had seen the vessel disappear which had borne her away, his heart overflowed with anguish, and he wept bitterly.

We continually watched his movements, apprehensive of some fatal consequence from the violent agitation of his mind. His mother and Madame de la Tour conjured him, in the most tender manner, not to increase their affliction by his despair. At length the latter soothed his mind by lavishing upon him epithets calculated to awaken his hopes, calling him her son, her dear son, her son-in-law, whom she destined for her daughter. She persuaded

him to return home and to take some food. He seated himself next to the place which used to be occupied by the companion of his childhood; and, as if she had still been present, he spoke to her, and made as though he would offer her whatever he knew was most agreeable to her taste; then, starting from this dream of fancy, he began to weep.

For some days he employed himself in gathering together everything which had belonged to Virginia—the last nosegays she had worn, the cocoa shell from which she used to drink; and after kissing a thousand times these relics of his beloved, to him the most precious treasures which the world contained, he hid them in his bosom. Amber does not shed so sweet a perfume as the veriest trifles touched by those we love. At length, perceiving that the indulgence of his grief increased that of his mother and Madame de la Tour, and that the wants of the family demanded continual labour, he began, with the assistance of Domingo, to repair the damage done to the garden.

But soon afterward, this young man, hitherto indifferent as a creole to everything that was passing in the world, begged of me to teach him to read and write, in order that he might correspond with Virginia. He afterward wished to obtain a knowledge of geography, that he might form some idea of the country where she would disembark; and of history, that he might know something of the manners of the society in which she would be placed. The powerful sentiment of love, which directed his present studies, had already instructed him in agriculture, and in the art of laying out grounds with advantage and beauty. It must be admitted, that to the fond dreams of this restless and ardent passion mankind are indebted for most of the arts and sciences, while its disappointments have given birth to philosophy, which teaches us to bear up under

misfortune. Love, thus the general link of all beings, becomes the great spring of society, by inciting us to knowledge as well as to pleasure.

Paul found little satisfaction in the study of geography, which, instead of describing the natural history of each country, gave only a view of its political divisions and boundaries. History, and especially modern history, interested him little more. He there saw only general and periodical evils, the causes of which he could not discover; wars without either motive or reason; uninteresting intrigues; with nations destitute of principle, and princes void of humanity. To this branch of reading he preferred romances, which, being chiefly occupied by the private feelings and concerns of men, sometimes represented situations similar to his own. Thus, no book gave him so much pleasure as *Telemachus*, from the pictures it draws of pastoral life, and of the passions which are most natural to the human breast. He read aloud to his mother and Madame de la Tour those parts which affected him most sensibly; but sometimes, touched by the most tender remembrances, his emotion would choke his utterance, and his eyes be filled with tears. He fancied he had found in Virginia the dignity and wisdom of Antiope, united to the misfortunes and tenderness of Eucharis. With very different sensations he perused our fashionable novels, filled with licentious morals and maxims. And when he was informed that these works drew a tolerably faithful picture of European society, he trembled, and not without some appearance of reason, lest Virginia should become corrupted by it, and forget him.

More than a year and a half, indeed, passed away before Madame de la Tour received any tidings of her aunt or her daughter. During that period she only accidentally heard that Virginia had safely arrived in France. At

length, however, a vessel which stopped here in its way to the Indies brought a packet to Madame de la Tour, and a letter written by Virginia's own hand. Although this amiable and considerate girl had written in a guarded manner, that she might not wound her mother's feelings, it appeared evident enough that she was unhappy. The letter painted so naturally her situation and her character, that I have retained it almost word for word:

"MY DEAR AND BELOVED MOTHER:

"I have already sent you several letters, written by my own hand, but having received no answer, I am afraid they have not reached you. I have better hopes for this, from the means I have now gained of sending you tidings of myself, and of hearing from you.

"I have shed many tears since our separation. I who never used to weep, but for the misfortunes of others! My aunt was much astonished, when, having, upon my arrival, inquired what accomplishments I possessed, I told her that I could neither read nor write. She asked me what then I had learned, since I came into the world; and when I answered that I had been taught to take care of the household affairs, and to obey your will, she told me that I had received the education of a servant. The next day she placed me as a boarder in a great abbey near Paris, where I have masters of all kinds, who teach me, among other things, history, geography, grammar, mathematics, and riding on horseback. But I have so little capacity for all these sciences, that I fear I shall make but small progress with my masters. I feel that I am a very poor creature, with very little ability to learn what they teach. My aunt's kindness, however, does not decrease. She gives me new dresses every season; and she has placed two waiting women with me, who are dressed like fine ladies. She

has made me take the title of countess; but has obliged me to renounce the name of La Tour, which is as dear to me as it is to you, from all you have told me of the sufferings my father endured in order to marry you. She has given me in place of your name that of your family, which is also dear to me, because it was your name when a girl. Seeing myself in so splendid a situation, I implored her to let me send you something to assist you. But how shall I repeat her answer! Yet you have desired me always to tell you the truth. She told me, then, that a little would be of no use to you, and that a great deal would only encumber you in the simple life you led. As you know I could not write, I endeavoured, upon my arrival, to send you tidings of myself by another hand; but, finding no person here in whom I could place confidence, I applied night and day to learn to read and write; and Heaven, who saw my motive for learning, no doubt assisted my endeavours, for I succeeded in both in a short time. I intrusted my first letters to some of the ladies here, who, I have reason to think, carried them to my aunt. This time I have recourse to a boarder, who is my friend. I send you her direction, by means of which I shall receive your answer. My aunt has forbid my holding any correspondence whatever with any one, lest, she says, it should occasion an obstacle to the great views she has for my advantage. No person is allowed to see me at the grate but herself, and an old nobleman, one of her friends, who, she says, is much pleased with me. I am sure I am not at all so with him, nor should I, even if it were possible for me to be pleased with any one at present.

“I live in all the splendour of affluence, and have not a sous at my disposal. They say I might make an improper use of money. Even my clothes belong to my *femmes de chambre*, who quarrel about them before I have

left them off. In the midst of riches, I am poorer than when I lived with you; for I have nothing to give away. When I found that the great accomplishments they taught me would not procure me the power of doing the smallest good, I had recourse to my needle, of which happily you had taught me the use. I send several pairs of stockings of my own making for you and my mamma Margaret, a cap for Domingo, and one of my red handkerchiefs for Mary. I also send with this packet some kernels, and seeds of various kinds of fruits which I gathered in the abbey park during my hours of recreation. I have also sent a few seeds of violets, daisies, buttercups, poppies, and scabious, which I picked up in the fields. There are much more beautiful flowers in the meadows of this country than in ours, but nobody cares for them. I am sure that you and my mamma Margaret will be better pleased with this bag of seeds than you were with the bag of piastres, which was the cause of our separation and of my tears. It will give me great delight if you should one day see apple-trees growing by the side of our plantains, and elms blending their foliage with that of our cocoa-trees. You will fancy yourself in Normandy, which you love so much.

“ You desired me to relate to you my joys and my griefs. I have no joys far from you. As for my griefs, I endeavour to soothe them by reflecting that I am in the situation in which it was the will of God that you should place me. But my greatest affliction is, that no one here speaks to me of you, and that I can not speak of you to any one. My *femmes de chambre*, or rather those of my aunt, for they belong more to her than to me, told me the other day, when I wished to turn the conversation upon the objects most dear to me, ‘Remember, mademoiselle, that you are a French woman, and must forget that land of savages.’

Ah! sooner will I forget myself, than forget the spot on which I was born and where you dwell! It is this country which is to me a land of savages, for I live alone, having no one to whom I can impart those feelings of tenderness for you which I shall bear with me to the grave.—I am,

“My dearest and beloved Mother,

“Your affectionate and dutiful Daughter,

“VIRGINIE DE LA TOUR.”

I recommend to your goodness Mary and Domingo, who took so much care of my infancy: caress Fidele for me, who found me in the wood.”

Paul was astonished that Virginia had not said one word of him—she, who had not forgotten even the house-dog. But he was not aware that, however long a woman’s letter may be, she never fails to leave her dearest sentiments for the end.

In a postscript Virginia particularly recommended to Paul’s attention two kinds of seed—those of the violet and the scabious. She gave him some instructions upon the natural characters of these flowers, and the spots most proper for their cultivation. “The violet,” she said, “produces a little flower of a dark purple colour, which delights to conceal itself beneath the bushes; but it is soon discovered by its wide-spreading perfume.” She desired that these seeds might be sown by the border of the fountain, at the foot of her cocoa-tree. “The scabious,” she added, “produces a beautiful flower of a pale blue, and a black ground spotted with white. You might fancy it was in mourning; and for this reason it is also called the widow’s flower. It grows best in bleak spots, beaten by the winds.” She begged him to sow this upon the rock where she had spoken to him at night for the last time, and that,

in remembrance of her, he would henceforth give it the name of the Rock of Adieu.

She had put these seeds into a little purse, the tissue of which was exceedingly simple; but which appeared above all price to Paul, when he saw on it a P and a V entwined together, and knew that the beautiful hair which formed the cipher was the hair of Virginia.

The whole family listened with tears to the reading of the letter of this amiable and virtuous girl. Her mother answered it in the name of the little society, desiring her to remain or return as she thought proper; and assuring her that happiness had left their dwelling since her departure, and that, for herself, she was inconsolable.

Paul also sent her a very long letter, in which he assured her that he would arrange the garden in a manner agreeable to her taste, and mingle together in it the plants of Europe with those of Africa, as she had blended their initials together in her work. He sent her some fruit from the cocoa-trees of the fountain, now arrived at maturity; telling her that he would not add any of the other productions of the island, that the desire of seeing them again might hasten her return. He conjured her to comply as soon as possible with the ardent wishes of her family, and above all, with his own, since he could never hereafter taste happiness away from her.

Paul sowed with a careful hand the European seeds, particularly the violet and scabious, the flowers of which seemed to bear some analogy to the character and present situation of Virginia, by whom they had been so especially recommended; but either they were dried up in the voyage, or the climate of this part of the world is unfavourable to their growth, for a very small number of them even came up, and not one arrived at full perfection.

In the meantime, envy, which ever comes to embitter

human happiness, particularly in the French colonies, spread some reports in the island which gave Paul much uneasiness. The passengers in the vessel which brought Virginia's letter asserted that she was upon the point of being married, and named the nobleman of the court to whom she was engaged. Some even went so far as to declare that the union had already taken place, and that they themselves had witnessed the ceremony.

Paul at first despised the report, brought by a merchant vessel, as he knew that they often spread erroneous intelligence in their passage; but some of the inhabitants of the island, with malignant pity, affecting to bewail the event, he was soon led to attach some degree of belief to this cruel intelligence. Besides, in some of the novels he had lately read, he had seen that perfidy was treated as a subject of pleasantry; and knowing that these books contained pretty faithful representations of European manners, he feared that the heart of Virginia was corrupted, and had forgotten its former engagements. Thus his new acquirements had already only served to render him more miserable; and his apprehensions were much increased by the circumstance, that though several ships touched here from Europe within the six months immediately following the arrival of her letter, not one of them brought any tidings of Virginia.

This unfortunate young man, with a heart torn by the most cruel agitation, often came to visit me, in the hope of confirming or banishing his uneasiness, by my experience of the world.

I live, as I have already told you, a league and a half from this point, upon the banks of a little river which glides along the Sloping Mountain; there I lead a solitary life, without wife, children, or slaves.

After having enjoyed, and lost, the rare felicity of liv-

ing with a congenial mind, the state of life which appears the least wretched is doubtless that of solitude. Every man who has much cause of complaint against his fellow-creatures seeks to be alone. It is also remarkable that all those nations which have been brought to wretchedness by their opinions, their manners, or their forms of government, have produced numerous classes of citizens altogether devoted to solitude and celibacy. Such were the Egyptians in their decline, and the Greeks of the Lower Empire; and such in our days are the Indians, the Chinese, the modern Greeks, the Italians, and the greater part of the eastern and southern nations of Europe. Solitude, by removing men from the miseries which follow in the train of social intercourse, brings them in some degree back to the unsophisticated enjoyment of Nature. In the midst of modern society, broken up by innumerable prejudices, the mind is in a constant turmoil of agitation. It is incessantly revolving in itself a thousand tumultuous and contradictory opinions, by which the members of an ambitious and miserable circle seek to raise themselves above each other. But in solitude the soul lays aside the morbid illusions which troubled her, and resumes the pure consciousness of herself, of Nature, and of its Author, as the muddy water of a torrent which has ravaged the plains, coming to rest, and diffusing itself over some low grounds out of its course, deposits there the slime it has taken up, and, resuming its wonted transparency, reflects, with its own shores, the verdure of the earth and the light of heaven. Thus does solitude recruit the powers of the body as well as those of the mind. It is among hermits that are found the men who carry human existence to its extreme limits: such are the Brahmans of India.

In brief, I consider solitude so necessary to happiness,

even in the world itself, that it appears to me impossible to derive lasting pleasure from any pursuit whatever, or to regulate our conduct by any stable principle, if we do not create for ourselves a mental void, whence our own views rarely emerge, and into which the opinions of others never enter. I do not mean to say that man ought to live absolutely alone: he is connected by his necessities with all mankind; his labours are due to man; and he owes something, too, to the rest of Nature. But as God has given to each of us organs perfectly adapted to the element of the globe on which we live—feet for the soil, lungs for the air, eyes for the light, without the power of changing the use of any of these faculties—he has reserved for himself, as the Author of life, that which is its chief organ, the heart.

I thus pass my days far from mankind, whom I wished to serve, and by whom I have been persecuted. After having travelled over many countries of Europe, and some parts of America and Africa, I at length pitched my tent in this thinly-peopled island, allured by its mild climate and its solitudes. A cottage which I built in the woods, at the foot of a tree, a little field which I cleared with my own hands, a river which glides before my door, suffice for my wants and for my pleasures. I blend with these enjoyments the perusal of some chosen books, which teach me to become better. They make that world, which I have abandoned, still contribute something to my happiness. They lay before me pictures of those passions which render its inhabitants so miserable; and in the comparison I am thus led to make between their lot and my own, I feel a kind of negative enjoyment. Like a man saved from shipwreck and thrown upon a rock, I contemplate, from my solitude, the storms which rage through the rest of the world; and my repose seems

more profound from the distant sound of the tempest.

As men have ceased to fall in my way, I no longer view them with aversion; I only pity them. If I sometimes fall in with an unfortunate being, I try to help him by my counsels, as a passer-by on the brink of a torrent extends his hand to save a wretch from drowning. But I have hardly ever found any but the innocent attentive to my voice. Nature calls the majority of men to her in vain. Each of them forms an image of her for himself, and invests her with his own passions. He pursues during the whole of his life this vain phantom, which leads him astray; and he afterward complains to Heaven of the misfortunes which he has thus created for himself. Among the many children of misfortune whom I have endeavoured to lead back to the enjoyments of Nature, I have not found one but was intoxicated with his own miseries. They have listened to me at first with attention, in the hope that I could teach them how to acquire glory or fortune; but when they found that I only wished to instruct them how to dispense with these chimeras, their attention has been converted into pity, because I did not prize their miserable happiness. They blamed my solitary life: they alleged that they alone were useful to men, and they endeavoured to draw me into their vortex. But if I communicate with all, I lay myself open to none. It is often sufficient for me to serve as a lesson to myself. In my present tranquility, I pass in review the agitating pursuits of my past life, to which I formerly attached so much value—patronage, fortune, reputation, pleasure, and the opinions which are ever at strife over all the earth. I compare the men whom I have seen disputing furiously over these vanities, and who are no more, to the tiny waves of my rivulet, which break in foam against its rocky

bed, and disappear, never to return. As for me, I suffer myself to float calmly down the stream of time to the shoreless ocean of futurity; while, in the contemplation of the pleasant harmony of Nature, I elevate my soul toward its supreme Author, and hope for a more happy lot in another state of existence.

Although you can not descry from my hermitage, situated in the midst of a forest, that immense variety of objects which this elevated spot presents, the grounds are disposed with peculiar beauty, at least to one who, like me, prefers the seclusion of a home scene to great and extensive prospects. The river which glides before my door passes in a straight line across the woods, looking like a long canal shaded by all kinds of trees. Among them are the gum-tree, the ebony-tree, and that which is here called *bois de pomme*, with olive and cinnamon-wood trees; while in some parts the cabbage-palm trees raise their naked stems more than a hundred feet high, their summits crowned with a cluster of leaves, and towering above the woods like one forest piled upon another. Lianas, of various foliage, intertwining themselves among the trees, form, here, arcades of foliage, there, long canopies of verdure. Most of these trees shed aromatic odours so powerful, that the garments of a traveller who has passed through the forest often retain for hours the most delicious fragrance. In the season when they produce their lavish blossoms, they appear as if half covered with snow. One of the principal ornaments of our woods is the *calbassia*, a tree not only distinguished for its beautiful tint of verdure, but for other properties which Madame de la Tour has described in the following sonnet, written at one of her first visits to my hermitage:

SONNET TO THE CALBASSIA-TREE

"Sublime Calbassia, luxuriant tree!
 How soft the gloom thy bright-hued foliage throws,
 While from thy pulp a healing balsam flows,
 Whose power the suffering wretch from pain can free,
 My pensive footsteps ever turn to thee!
 Since oft, while musing on my lasting woes,
 Beneath thy flowery white bells I repose,
 Symbol of friendship dost thou seem to me;
 For thus has Friendship cast her soothing shade
 O'er my unsheltered bosom's keen distress;
 Thus sought to heal the wounds which love has made,
 And temper bleeding Sorrow's sharp excess!
 Ah, not in vain she lends her balmy aid—
 The agonies she can not cure are less."

Toward the end of summer, various kinds of foreign birds hasten, impelled by some inexplicable instinct, from unknown regions on the other side of immense oceans, to feed upon the grain and other vegetable productions of the island; and the brilliancy of their plumage forms a striking contrast to the more sombre tints of the foliage, embrowned by the sun. Among these are various kinds of paroquets, and the blue pigeon, called here the pigeon of Holland, and the wandering and majestic white bird of the tropic, which Madame de la Tour thus apostrophized:

SONNET TO THE WHITE BIRD OF THE TROPIC

"Bird of the tropic! thou who lov'st to stray
 Where thy long pinions sweep the sultry line,
 Or mark'st the bounds which torrid beams confine
 By thy averted course, that shuns the ray
 Oblique, enamoured of sublimer day:
 Oft on yon cliff thy folded plumes recline,
 And drop those snowy feathers Indians twine
 To crown the warrior's brow with honours gay.
 O'er trackless oceans what impels thy wing?
 Does no soft instinct in thy soul prevail?
 No sweet affection to thy bosom cling,
 And bid thee oft thy absent nest bewail?
 Yet thou again to that dear spot canst spring;
 But I my long-lost home no more shall hail!"

Monkeys, the domestic inhabitants of our forests, sport upon the dark branches of the trees, from which they are easily distinguished by their gray and greenish skin, and their black visages. Some hang, suspended by the tail, and swing themselves in air; others leap from branch to branch, bearing their young in their arms. The murderous gun has never affrighted these peaceful children of Nature. You hear nothing but sounds of joy—the warblings and unknown notes of birds from the countries of the south, repeated from a distance by the echoes of the forest. The river, which pours in foaming eddies over a bed of rock, through the midst of the woods, reflects here and there upon its limpid waters their venerable masses of verdure and of shade, along with the sports of their happy inhabitants. About a thousand paces from thence it forms several cascades, clear as crystal in their fall, but broken at the bottom in frothy surges. Innumerable confused sounds issue from these watery tumults, which, borne by the winds across the forest, now sink in distance, now all at once swell out, booming on the ear like the bells of a cathedral. The air, kept ever in motion by the running water, preserves upon the banks of the river, amid all the summer heats, a freshness and verdure rarely found in this island, even on the summits of the mountains.

At some distance from this place is a rock, placed far enough from the cascade to prevent the ear from being deafened with the noise of its waters, and sufficiently near for the enjoyment of seeing it, of feeling its coolness and hearing its gentle murmurs. Thither, amid the heats of summer, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Virginia, Paul, and myself, sometimes repaired, to dine beneath the shadow of this rock. Virginia, who always, in her most ordinary actions, was mindful of the good of others, never

ate of any fruit in the fields without planting the seed or kernel in the ground. "From this," said she, "trees will come, which will yield their fruit to some traveller, or at least to some bird." One day, having eaten of the papaw fruit at the foot of that rock, she planted the seeds on the spot. Soon after, several papaw-trees sprang up, among which was one with female blossoms, that is to say, a fruit-bearing tree. This tree, at the time of Virginia's departure, was scarcely as high as her knee; but as it is a plant of rapid growth, in the course of two years it had gained the height of twenty feet, and the upper part of its stem was encircled by several rows of ripe fruit. Paul, wandering accidentally to the spot, was struck with delight at seeing this lofty tree, which had been planted by his beloved; but the emotion was transient, and instantly gave place to a deep melancholy at this evidence of her long absence. The objects which are habitually before us do not bring to our minds an adequate idea of the rapidity of life; they decline insensibly with ourselves: but it is those we behold again after having for some years lost sight of them, that most powerfully impress us with a feeling of the swiftness with which the tide of life flows on. Paul was no less overwhelmed and affected at the sight of this great papaw-tree, loaded with fruit, than is the traveller when, after a long absence from his own country, he finds his contemporaries no more, but their children, whom he left at the breast, themselves now become the fathers of families. Paul sometimes thought of cutting down the tree, which recalled too sensibly the distracting remembrance of Virginia's prolonged absence. At other times, contemplating it as a monument of her benevolence, he kissed its trunk, and apostrophized it in terms of the most passionate regret. Indeed, I have myself gazed upon it with more emotion and more veneration.

than upon the triumphal arches of Rome. May Nature, which every day destroys the monuments of kingly ambition, multiply in our forests those which testify the beneficence of a poor young girl!

At the foot of this papaw-tree I was always sure to meet with Paul when he came into our neighbourhood. One day I found him there absorbed in melancholy, and a conversation took place between us, which I will relate to you, if I do not weary you too much by my long digressions: they are perhaps pardonable to my age and to my last friendships. I will relate it to you in the form of a dialogue, that you may form some idea of the natural good sense of this young man. You will easily distinguish the speakers from the character of his questions and of my answers.

PAUL

"I am very unhappy. Mademoiselle de la Tour has now been gone two years and eight months, and we have heard no tidings of her for eight months and a half. She is rich, and I am poor: she has forgotten me. I have a great mind to follow her. I will go to France; I will serve the king; I will make my fortune; and then Mademoiselle de la Tour's aunt will bestow her niece upon me when I shall have become a great lord."

THE OLD MAN

"But, my dear friend, have not you told me that you are not of noble birth?"

PAUL

"My mother has told me so; but, as for myself, I know not what noble birth means. I never perceived that I had less than others, or that others had more than I."

THE OLD MAN

"Obscure birth, in France, shuts every door of access to great employments; nor can you even be received among any distinguished body of men, if you labour under this disadvantage."

PAUL

"You have often told me that it was one source of the greatness of France that her humblest subject might attain the highest honours; and you have cited to me many instances of celebrated men who, born in a mean condition, had conferred honour upon their country. It was your wish, then, by concealing the truth, to stimulate my ardour?"

THE OLD MAN

"Never, my son, would I lower it. I told you the truth with regard to the past; but now, everything has undergone a great change. Everything in France is now to be obtained by interest alone; every place and employment is now become as it were the patrimony of a small number of families, or is divided among public bodies. The king is a sun, and the nobles and great corporate bodies surround him like so many clouds; it is almost impossible for any of his rays to reach you. Formerly, under less exclusive administrations, such phenomena have been seen. Then talents and merit showed themselves everywhere, as newly cleared lands are always loaded with abundance. But great kings, who can really form a just estimate of men, and choose them with judgment, are rare. The ordinary race of monarchs allow themselves to be guided by the nobles and people who surround them."

PAUL

"But perhaps I shall find one of these nobles to protect me."

THE OLD MAN

"To gain the protection of the great, you must lend yourself to their ambition, and administer to their pleasures. You would never succeed; for, in addition to your obscure birth, you have too much integrity."

PAUL

"But I will perform such courageous actions, I will be so faithful to my word, so exact in the performance of my duties, so zealous and so constant in my friendships, that I will render myself worthy to be adopted by some one of them. In the ancient histories you have made me read, I have seen many examples of such adoptions."

THE OLD MAN

"Oh, my young friend! among the Greeks and Romans, even in their decline, the nobles had some respect for virtue: but out of all the immense number of men, sprung from the mass of the people, in France, who have signalized themselves in every possible manner, I do not recollect a single instance of one being adopted by any great family. If it were not for our kings, virtue, in our country, would be eternally condemned as plebeian. As I said before, the monarch sometimes, when he perceives it, renders to it due honour; but in the present day, the distinctions which should be bestowed on merit are generally to be obtained by money alone."

PAUL

"If I can not find a nobleman to adopt me, I will seek to please some public body. I will espouse its interests and its opinions: I will make myself beloved by it."

THE OLD MAN

"You will act then like other men?—you will renounce your conscience to obtain a fortune?"

PAUL

"Oh no! I will never lend myself to anything but the truth."

THE OLD MAN

"Instead of making yourself beloved, you would become an object of dislike. Besides, public bodies have never taken much interest in the discovery of truth. All opinions are nearly alike to ambitious men, provided only that they themselves can gain their ends."

PAUL

"How unfortunate I am! Everything bars my progress. I am condemned to pass my life in ignoble toil, far from Virginia!" As he said this, he sighed deeply.

THE OLD MAN

"Let God be your patron, and mankind the public body you would serve. Be constantly attached to them both. Families, corporations, nations, and kings have, all of them, their prejudices and their passions; it is often necessary to serve them by the practice of vice: God and mankind at large require only the exercise of the virtues.

"But why do you wish to be distinguished from other men? It is hardly a natural sentiment, for, if all men possessed it, every one would be at constant strife with his neighbour. Be satisfied with fulfilling your duty in the station in which Providence has placed you: be grateful for your lot, which permits you to enjoy the blessing of a quiet conscience, and which does not compel you, like the great, to let your happiness rest on the opinion of

the little; or, like the little, to cringe to the great, in order to obtain the means of existence. You are now placed in a country and a condition in which you are not reduced to deceive or to flatter any one, or to debase yourself, as the greater part of those who seek their fortune in Europe are obliged to do; in which the exercise of no virtue is forbidden you; in which you may be, with impunity, good, sincere, well informed, patient, temperate, chaste, indulgent to others' faults, pious, and no shaft of ridicule be aimed at you to destroy your wisdom, as yet only in its bud. Heaven has given you liberty, health, a good conscience, and friends: kings themselves, whose favour you desire, are not so happy."

PAUL

"Ah! I want only to have Virginia with me: without her I have nothing—with her, I should possess all my desire. She alone is to me birth, glory, and fortune. But, since her relation will only give her to some one with a great name, I will study. By the aid of study and of books, learning and celebrity are to be attained. I will become a man of science: I will render my knowledge useful to the service of my country, without injuring any one, or owing dependence on any one. I will become celebrated, and my glory shall be achieved only by myself."

THE OLD MAN

"My son, talents are a gift yet more rare than either birth or riches, and undoubtedly they are a greater good than either, since they can never be taken away from us, and they obtain for us everywhere public esteem. But they may be said to be worth all that they cost us. They are seldom acquired but by every species of privation, by the possession of exquisite sensibility, which often pro-

duces inward unhappiness, and which exposes us without to the malice and persecutions of our contemporaries. The lawyer envies not, in France, the glory of the soldier, nor does the soldier envy that of the naval officer; but they will all oppose you and bar your progress to distinction, because your assumption of superior ability will wound the self-love of them all. You say that you will do good to men; but recollect, that he who makes the earth produce a single ear of corn more, renders them a greater service than he who writes a book."

PAUL

"Oh! she, then, who planted this papaw-tree, has made a more useful and more grateful present to the inhabitants of these forests than if she had given them a whole library." So saying, he threw his arms round the tree, and kissed it with transport.

THE OLD MAN

"The best of books—that which preaches nothing but equality, brotherly love, charity, and peace—the Gospel, has served as a pretext, during many centuries, for Europeans to let loose all their fury. How many tyrannies, both public and private, are still practised in its name on the face of the earth! After this, who will dare to flatter himself that anything he can write will be of service to his fellow-men? Remember the fate of most of the philosophers who have preached to them wisdom. Homer, who clothed it in such noble verse, asked for alms all his life. Socrates, whose conversation and example gave such admirable lessons to the Athenians, was sentenced by them to be poisoned. His sublime disciple, Plato, was delivered over to slavery by the order of the very prince who protected him; and, before them, Pythagoras, whose hu-

manity extended even to animals, was burned alive by the Crotoniates. What do I say?—many even of these illustrious names have descended to us disfigured by some traits of satire by which they became characterized, human ingratitude taking pleasure in thus recognising them; and if, in the crowd, the glory of some names is come down to us without spot or blemish, we shall find that they who have borne them have lived far from the society of their contemporaries; like those statues which are found entire beneath the soil in Greece and Italy, and which, by being hidden in the bosom of the earth, have escaped, uninjured, from the fury of the barbarians.

“ You see, then, that to acquire the glory which a turbulent literary career can give you, you must not only be virtuous, but ready, if necessary, to sacrifice life itself. But, after all, do not fancy that the great in France trouble themselves about such glory as this. Little do they care for literary men, whose knowledge brings them neither honours, nor power, nor even admission at court. Persecution, it is true, is rarely practised in this age, because it is habitually indifferent to everything except wealth and luxury; but knowledge and virtue no longer lead to distinction, since everything in the state is to be purchased with money. Formerly, men of letters were certain of reward by some place in the church, the magistracy, or the administration: now, they are considered good for nothing but to write books. But this fruit of their minds, little valued by the world at large, is still worthy of its celestial origin. For these books is reserved the privilege of shedding lustre on obscure virtue, of consoling the unhappy, of enlightening nations, and of telling the truth even to kings. This is, unquestionably, the most august commission with which Heaven can honour a mortal upon this earth. Where is the author who would

not be consoled for the injustice or contempt of those who are the dispensers of the ordinary gifts of fortune, when he reflects that his work may pass from age to age, from nation to nation, opposing a barrier to error and to tyranny; and that, from amid the obscurity in which he has lived, there will shine forth a glory which will efface that of the common herd of monarchs, the monuments of whose deeds perish in oblivion, notwithstanding the flatterers who erect and magnify them?"

PAUL

"Ah! I am only covetous of glory to bestow it on Virginia, and render her dear to the whole world. But can you, who know so much, tell me whether we shall ever be married? I should like to be a very learned man, if only for the sake of knowing what will come to pass."

THE OLD MAN

"Who would live, my son, if the future were revealed to him?—when a single anticipated misfortune gives us so much useless uneasiness—when the foreknowledge of one certain calamity is enough to embitter every day that precedes it? It is better not to pry too curiously even into the things which surround us. Heaven, which has given us the power of reflection to foresee our necessities, gave us also those very necessities to set limits to its exercise."

PAUL

"You tell me that with money people in Europe acquire dignities and honours. I will go, then, to enrich myself in Bengal, and afterward proceed to Paris, and marry Virginia. I will embark at once."

THE OLD MAN

"What! would you leave her mother and yours?"

PAUL

"Why, you yourself have advised my going to the Indies."

THE OLD MAN

"Virginia was then here; but you are now the only means of support both of her mother and of your own."

PAUL

"Virginia will assist them, by means of her rich relation."

THE OLD MAN

"The rich care little for those from whom no honour is reflected upon themselves in the world. Many of them have relations much more to be pitied than Madame de la Tour, who, for want of their assistance, sacrifice their liberty for bread, and pass their lives immured within the walls of a convent."

PAUL

"Oh, what a country is Europe! Virginia must come back here. What need has she of a rich relation? She was so happy in these huts; she looked so beautiful and so well dressed with a red handkerchief or a few flowers round her head! Return, Virginia! leave your sumptuous mansions and your grandeur, and come back to these rocks—to the shade of these woods and of our cocoa-trees. Alas! you are perhaps even now unhappy!"—and he began to shed tears. "My father," continued he, "hide nothing from me: if you can not tell me whether I shall marry Virginia, tell me at least if she loves me still, surrounded as she is by noblemen who speak to the king, and who go to see her."

THE OLD MAN

"Oh, my dear friend! I am sure, for many reasons, that she loves you; but above all, because she is virtu-

ous." At these words he threw himself on my neck in a transport of joy.

PAUL

"But do you think that the women of Europe are false, as they are represented in the comedies and books which you have lent me?"

THE OLD MAN

"Women are false in those countries where men are tyrants. Violence always engenders a disposition to deceive."

PAUL

"In what way can men tyrannize over women?"

THE OLD MAN

"In giving them in marriage without consulting their inclinations—in uniting a young girl to an old man, or a woman of sensibility to a frigid and indifferent husband."

PAUL

"Why not join together those who are suited to each other—the young to the young, and lovers to those they love?"

THE OLD MAN

"Because few young men in France have property enough to support them when they are married, and can not acquire it till the greater part of their life is passed. While young, they seduce the wives of others, and when they are old, they can not secure the affections of their own. At first, they themselves are deceivers; and afterward, they are deceived in their turn. This is one of the reactions of that eternal justice by which the world is governed: an excess on one side is sure to be balanced by one on the other. Thus, the greater part of Europeans

pass their lives in this twofold irregularity, which increases everywhere, in the same proportion that wealth is accumulated in the hands of a few individuals. Society is like a garden, where shrubs can not grow if they are overshadowed by lofty trees: but there is this wide difference between them—that the beauty of a garden may result from the admixture of a small number of forest trees, while the prosperity of a state depends on the multitude and equality of its citizens, and not on a small number of very rich men.”

PAUL

“But where is the necessity for being rich in order to marry?”

THE OLD MAN

“In order to pass through life in abundance, without being obliged to work.”

PAUL

“But why not work? I am sure I work hard enough.”

THE OLD MAN

“In Europe, working with your hands is considered a degradation: it is compared to the labour performed by a machine. The occupation of cultivating the earth is the most despised of all. Even an artisan is held in more estimation than a peasant.”

PAUL

“What! do you mean to say that the art which furnishes food for mankind is despised in Europe? I hardly understand you.”

THE OLD MAN

“Oh! it is impossible for a person educated according to Nature to form an idea of the depraved state of society.

It is easy to form a precise notion of order, but not of disorder. Beauty, virtue, happiness, have all their defined proportions: deformity, vice, and misery have none."

PAUL

"The rich then are always very happy! They meet with no obstacles to the fulfilment of their wishes, and they can lavish happiness on those whom they love."

THE OLD MAN

"Far from it, my son! They are, for the most part, satiated with pleasure, for this very reason—that it costs them no trouble. Have you never yourself experienced how much the pleasure of repose is increased by fatigue; that of eating, by hunger; or that of drinking, by thirst? The pleasure also of loving and being loved is only to be acquired by innumerable privations and sacrifices. Wealth, by anticipating all their necessities, deprives its possessors of all these pleasures. To this ennui, consequent upon satiety, may also be added the pride which springs from their opulence, and which is wounded by the most trifling privation, when the greatest enjoyments have ceased to charm. The perfume of a thousand roses gives pleasure but for a moment; but the pain occasioned by a single thorn endures long after the infliction of the wound. A single evil in the midst of their pleasures is to the rich like a thorn among flowers; to the poor, on the contrary, one pleasure amid all their troubles is a flower among a wilderness of thorns; they have a most lively enjoyment of it. The effect of everything is increased by contrast; Nature has balanced all things. Which condition, after all, do you consider preferable—to have scarcely anything to hope and everything to fear, or to have everything to hope and nothing to fear? The former condition is that

of the rich, the latter that of the poor. But either of these extremes is with difficulty supported by man, whose happiness consists in a middle station of life, in union with virtue."

PAUL

"What do you understand by virtue?"

THE OLD MAN

"To you, my son, who support your family by your labour, it need hardly be defined. Virtue consists in endeavouring to do all the good we can to others, with an ultimate intention of pleasing God alone."

PAUL

"Oh! how virtuous, then, is Virginia! Virtue led her to seek for riches, that she might practise benevolence. Virtue induced her to quit this island, and virtue will bring her back to it."

The idea of her speedy return firing the imagination of this young man, all his anxieties suddenly vanished. Virginia, he was persuaded, had not written, because she would soon arrive. It took so little time to come from Europe with a fair wind! Then he enumerated the vessels which had made this passage of four thousand five hundred leagues in less than three months; and perhaps the vessel in which Virginia had embarked might not be more than two. Shipbuilders were now so ingenious, and sailors were so expert! He then talked to me of the arrangements he intended to make for her reception, of the new house he would build for her, and of the pleasures and surprises which he would contrive for her every day, when she was his wife. His wife! The idea filled him with ecstasy. "At least, my dear father," said he, "you shall then do no more work than you please. As Vir-

ginia will be rich, we shall have plenty of negroes, and they shall work for you. You shall always live with us, and have no other care than to amuse yourself and be happy"—and, his heart throbbing with joy, he flew to communicate these exquisite anticipations to his family.

In a short time, however, these enchanting hopes were succeeded by the most cruel apprehensions. It is always the effect of violent passions to throw the soul into opposite extremes. Paul returned the next day to my dwelling, overwhelmed with melancholy, and said to me: "I hear nothing from Virginia. Had she left Europe, she would have written me word of her departure. Ah! the reports which I have heard concerning her are but too well founded. Her aunt has married her to some great lord. She, like others, has been undone by the love of riches. In those books which paint women so well, virtue is treated but as a subject of romance. If Virginia had been virtuous, she would never have forsaken her mother and me. I do nothing but think of her, and she has forgotten me. I am wretched, and she is diverting herself. The thought distracts me: I can not bear myself! Would to Heaven that war were declared in India! I would go there and die."

"My son," I answered, "that courage which prompts us on to court death is but the courage of a moment, and is often excited only by the vain applause of men, or by the hope of posthumous renown. There is another description of courage, rarer and more necessary, which enables us to support, without witness and without applause, the vexations of life: this virtue is patience. Relying for support, not upon the opinions of others, or upon the impulse of the passions, but upon the will of God, patience is the courage of virtue."

"Ah!" cried he, "I am then without virtue! Everything overwhelms me and drives me to despair."

"Equal, constant, and invariable virtue," I replied, "belongs not to man. In the midst of the many passions which agitate us, our reason is disordered and obscured: but there is an ever-burning lamp at which we can rekindle its flame; and that is, literature.

"Literature, my dear son, is the gift of Heaven—a ray of that wisdom by which the universe is governed, and which man, inspired by a celestial intelligence, has drawn down to earth. Like the rays of the sun, it enlightens us, it rejoices us, it warms us with a heavenly flame, and seems, in some sort like the element of fire, to bend all Nature to our use. By its means we are enabled to bring around us all things, all places, all men, and all times. It assists us to regulate our manners and our life. By its aid, too, our passions are calmed, vice is suppressed, and virtue encouraged by the memorable examples of great and good men which it has handed down to us, and whose time-honoured images it ever brings before our eyes. Literature is a daughter of Heaven, who has descended upon earth to soften and to charm away all the evils of the human race. The greatest writers have ever appeared in the worst times—in times in which society can hardly be held together—the times of barbarism and every species of depravity. My son, literature has consoled an infinite number of men more unhappy than yourself: Xenophon, banished from his country after having saved to her ten thousand of her sons; Scipio Africanus, wearied to death by the calumnies of the Romans; Lucullus, tormented by their cabals; and Catinat, by the ingratitude of a court. The Greeks, with their never-failing ingenuity, assigned to each of the Muses a portion of the great circle of human intelligence for her es-

pecial superintendence; we ought, in the same manner, to give up to them the regulation of our passions, to bring them under proper restraint. Literature, in this imaginative guise, would thus fulfil, in relation to the powers of the soul, the same functions as the Hours, who yoked and conducted the chariot of the Sun.

“Have recourse to your books, then, my son. The wise men who have written before our days are travellers who have preceded us in the paths of misfortune, and who stretch out a friendly hand toward us and invite us to join their society, when we are abandoned by everything else. A good book is a good friend.”

“Ah!” cried Paul, “I stood in no need of books when Virginia was here, and she had studied as little as myself: but when she had looked at me and called me her friend, I could not feel unhappy.”

“Undoubtedly,” said I, “there is no friend so agreeable as a mistress by whom we are beloved. There is, moreover, in woman a liveliness and gaiety which powerfully tends to dissipate the melancholy feelings of man; her presence drives away the dark phantoms of imagination produced by over-reflection. Upon her countenance sit soft attraction and tender confidence. What joy is not heightened when it is shared by her? What brow is not unbent by her smiles? What anger can resist her tears? Virginia will return with more philosophy than you, and she will be quite surprised to find the garden so unfinished—she who could think of its embellishments in spite of all the persecutions of her aunt, and when far from her mother and from you.”

The idea of Virginia's speedy return reanimated the drooping spirits of her lover, and he resumed his rural occupations, happy amid his toils, in the reflection that

they would soon find a termination so dear to the wishes of his heart.

One morning, at break of day (it was December 24, 1744), Paul when he arose perceived a white flag hoisted upon the Mountain of Discovery. This flag he knew to be the signal of a vessel descried at sea. He instantly flew to the town to learn if this vessel brought any tidings of Virginia, and waited there till the return of the pilot, who was gone, according to custom, to board the ship. The pilot did not return till the evening, when he brought the governor information that the signalled vessel was the *Saint-Geran*, of seven hundred tons burden, and commanded by a captain of the name of Aubin; that she was now four leagues out at sea, but would probably anchor at Port Louis the following afternoon, if the wind became fair: at present there was a calm. The pilot then handed to the governor a number of letters which the *Saint-Geran* had brought from France, among which was one addressed to Madame de la Tour, in the handwriting of Virginia. Paul seized upon the letter, kissed it with transport, and placing it in his bosom, flew to the plantation. No sooner did he perceive from a distance the family, who were awaiting his return upon the Rock of Adieus, than he waved the letter aloft in the air, without being able to utter a word. No sooner was the seal broken, than they all crowded round Madame de la Tour, to hear the letter read. Virginia informed her mother that she had experienced much ill-usage from her aunt, who, after having in vain urged her to a marriage against her inclination, had disinherited her, and had sent her back at a time when she would probably reach the Mauritius during the hurricane season. In vain, she added, had she endeavoured to soften her aunt, by representing what she owed to her mother, and to

her early habits: she was treated as a romantic girl, whose head had been turned by novels. She could now only think of the joy of again seeing and embracing her beloved family, and would have gratified her ardent desire at once by landing in the pilot's boat, if the captain had allowed her; but that he had objected, on account of the distance, and of a heavy swell, which, notwithstanding the calm, reigned in the open sea.

As soon as the letter was finished, the whole of the family, transported with joy, repeatedly exclaimed, "Virginia is arrived!" and mistresses and servants embraced each other. Madame de la Tour said to Paul, "My son, go and inform our neighbour of Virginia's arrival." Domingo immediately lighted a torch of bois de ronde, and he and Paul bent their way toward my dwelling.

It was about ten o'clock at night, and I was just going to extinguish my lamp and retire to rest, when I perceived through the palisades round my cottage a light in the woods. Soon after, I heard the voice of Paul calling me. I instantly arose, and had hardly dressed myself, when Paul, almost beside himself, and panting for breath, sprang on my neck, crying: "Come along, come along! Virginia is arrived. Let us go to the port: the vessel will anchor at break of day."

Scarcely had he uttered the words when we set off. As we were passing through the woods of the Sloping Mountain, and were already on the road which leads from the Shaddock Grove to the port, I heard some one walking behind us. It proved to be a negro, and he was advancing with hasty steps. When he had reached us, I asked him whence he came, and whither he was going with such expedition. He answered: "I come from that part of the island called Golden Dust; and am sent to the port, to inform the governor that a ship from France

has anchored under the Isle of Amber. She is firing guns of distress, for the sea is very rough." Having said this, the man left us, and pursued his journey without any further delay.

I then said to Paul: "Let us go toward the quarter of the Golden Dust, and meet Virginia there. It is not more than three leagues from hence." We accordingly bent our course toward the northern part of the island. The heat was suffocating. The moon had risen, and was surrounded by three large black circles. A frightful darkness shrouded the sky; but the frequent flashes of lightning discovered to us long rows of thick and gloomy clouds, hanging very low, and heaped together over the centre of the island, being driven in with great rapidity from the ocean, although not a breath of air was perceptible upon the land. As we walked along, we thought we heard peals of thunder; but on listening more attentively, we perceived that it was the sound of cannon at a distance, repeated by the echoes. These ominous sounds, joined to the tempestuous aspect of the heavens, made me shudder. I had little doubt of their being signals of distress from a ship in danger. In about half an hour the firing ceased, and I found the silence still more appalling than the dismal sounds which had preceded it.

We hastened on without uttering a word, or daring to communicate to each other our mutual apprehensions. At midnight, by great exertion, we arrived at the sea-shore, in that part of the island called Golden Dust. The billows were breaking against the beach with a horrible noise, covering the rocks and the strand with foam of a dazzling whiteness, blended with sparks of fire. By these phosphoric gleams we distinguished, notwithstanding the darkness, a number of fishing canoes, drawn up high upon the beach.

At the entrance of a wood, a short distance from us, we saw a fire, round which a party of the inhabitants was assembled. We repaired thither, in order to rest ourselves till the morning. While we were seated near this fire, one of the standers-by related that late in the afternoon he had seen a vessel in the open sea, driven toward the island by the currents; that the night had hidden it from his view; and that two hours after sunset he had heard the firing of signal-guns of distress, but that the surf was so high that it was impossible to launch a boat to go off to her; that a short time after, he thought he perceived the glimmering of the watch-lights on board the vessel, which he feared, by its having approached so near the coast, had steered between the mainland and the little Island of Amber, mistaking the latter for the Point of Endeavour, near which vessels pass in order to gain Port Louis; and that, if this were the case, which, however, he would not take upon himself to be certain of, the ship, he thought, was in very great danger. Another islander then informed us that he had frequently crossed the channel which separates the Isle of Amber from the coast, and had sounded it; that the anchorage was very good, and that the ship would there lie as safely as in the best harbour. "I would stake all I am worth upon it," said he, "and if I were on board, I should sleep as sound as on shore." A third bystander declared that it was impossible for the ship to enter that channel, which was scarcely navigable for a boat. He was certain, he said, that he had seen the vessel at anchor beyond the Isle of Amber; so that if the wind arose in the morning, she could either put to sea or gain the harbour. Other inhabitants gave different opinions upon this subject, which they continued to discuss in the usual desultory manner of the indolent creoles. Paul and I observed a

profound silence. We remained on this spot till break of day, but the weather was too hazy to admit of our distinguishing any object at sea, everything being covered with fog. All we could descry to seaward was a dark cloud, which they told us was the Isle of Amber, at the distance of a quarter of a league from the coast. On this gloomy day we could only discern the point of land on which we were standing, and the peaks of some inland mountains which started out occasionally from the midst of the clouds that hung around them.

At about seven in the morning we heard the sound of drums in the woods; it announced the approach of the governor, Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, who soon after arrived on horseback, at the head of a detachment of soldiers armed with muskets, and a crowd of islanders and negroes. He drew up his soldiers upon the beach, and ordered them to make a general discharge. This was no sooner done, than we perceived a glimmering light upon the water, which was instantly followed by the report of a cannon. We judged that the ship was at no great distance, and all ran toward that part whence the light and sound proceeded. We now discerned through the fog the hull and yards of a large vessel. We were so near to her that, notwithstanding the tumult of the waves, we could distinctly hear the whistle of the boat-swain and the shouts of the sailors, who cried out three times, "VIVE LE ROI!" this being the cry of the French in extreme danger, as well as in exuberant joy—as though they wished to call their prince to their aid, or to testify to him that they are prepared to lay down their lives in his service.

As soon as the Saint-Geran perceived that we were near enough to render her assistance, she continued to fire guns regularly at intervals of three minutes. Mon-

sieur de la Bourdonnais caused great fires to be lighted at certain distances upon the strand, and sent to all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in search of provisions, planks, cables, and empty barrels. A number of people soon arrived, accompanied by their negroes loaded with provisions and cordage, which they had brought from the plantations of Golden Dust, from the district of La Flaque, and from the river of the Rampart. One of the most aged of these planters, approaching the governor, said to him: "We have heard all night hollow noises in the mountain; in the woods, the leaves of the trees are shaken, although there is no wind: the sea-birds seek refuge upon the land: it is certain that all these signs announce a hurricane." "Well, my friends," answered the governor, "we are prepared for it, and no doubt the vessel is also."

Everything, indeed, presaged the near approach of the hurricane. The centre of the clouds in the zenith was of a dismal black, while their skirts were tinged with a copper-coloured hue. The air resounded with the cries of tropic-birds, petrels, frigate-birds, and innumerable other sea-fowl, which, notwithstanding the obscurity of the atmosphere, were seen coming from every point of the horizon to seek for shelter in the island.

Toward nine in the morning we heard in the direction of the ocean the most terrific noise, like the sound of thunder mingled with that of torrents rushing down the steepes of lofty mountains. A general cry was heard of "There is the hurricane!"—and the next moment a frightful gust of wind dispelled the fog which covered the Isle of Amber and its channel. The Saint-Geran then presented herself to our view, her deck crowded with people, her yards and topmasts lowered down, and her flag half-mast high, moored by four cables at her bow and

one at her stern. She had anchored between the Isle of Amber and the mainland, inside the chain of reefs which encircles the island, and which she had passed through in a place where no vessel had ever passed before. She presented her head to the waves that rolled in from the open sea, and as each billow rushed into the narrow strait where she lay, her bow lifted to such a degree as to show her keel; and at the same moment her stern, plunging into the water, disappeared altogether from our sight, as if it were swallowed up by the surges. In this position, driven by the winds and waves toward the shore, it was equally impossible for her to return by the passage through which she had made her way; or, by cutting her cables to strand herself upon the beach, from which she was separated by sandbanks and reefs of rocks. Every billow which broke upon the coast advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, throwing up heaps of shingle to the distance of fifty feet upon the land; then, rushing back, laid bare its sandy bed, from which it rolled immense stones, with a hoarse and dismal noise.

The sea, swelled by the violence of the wind, rose higher every moment; and the whole channel between this island and the Isle of Amber was soon one vast sheet of white foam, full of yawning pits of black and deep billows. Heaps of this foam, more than six feet high, were piled up at the bottom of the bay; and the winds which swept its surface carried masses of it over the steep sea-bank, scattering it upon the land to the distance of half a league. These innumerable white flakes, driven horizontally even to the very foot of the mountains, looked like snow issuing from the bosom of the ocean. The appearance of the horizon portended a lasting tempest: the sky and the water seemed blended together. Thick masses of clouds, of a frightful form, swept across the

zenith with the swiftness of birds, while others appeared motionless as rocks. Not a single spot of blue sky could be discerned in the whole firmament; and a pale yellow gleam only lightened up all the objects of the earth, the sea, and the skies.

From the violent rolling of the ship, what we all dreaded happened at last. The cables which held her bow were torn away; she then swung to a single hawser, and was instantly dashed upon the rocks, at a distance of half a cable's length from the shore. A general cry of horror issued from the spectators. Paul rushed forward to throw himself into the sea, when, seizing him by the arm, "My son," I exclaimed, "would you perish?"—"Let me go to save her," he cried, "or let me die!"

Seeing that despair had deprived him of reason, Domingo and I, in order to preserve him, fastened a long cord round his waist, and held it fast by the end. Paul then precipitated himself toward the Saint-Geran, now swimming, and now walking upon the rocks. Sometimes he had hopes of reaching the vessel, which the sea, by the reflux of its waves, had left almost dry, so that you could have walked round it on foot; but suddenly the billows, returning with fresh fury, shrouded it beneath mountains of water, which then lifted it upright upon its keel. The breakers at the same moment threw the unfortunate Paul far upon the beach, his legs bathed in blood, his bosom wounded, and himself half dead. The moment he had recovered the use of his senses, he arose, and returned with new ardour toward the vessel, the parts of which now yawned asunder from the violent strokes of the billows. The crew then, despairing of their safety, threw themselves in crowds into the sea upon yards, planks, hen-coops, tables, and barrels. At this moment we beheld an object which wrung our hearts with grief and pity:

a young lady appeared in the stern gallery of the Saint-Geran, stretching out her arms toward him who was making so many efforts to join her. It was Virginia. She had discovered her lover by his intrepidity. The sight of this amiable girl, exposed to such horrible danger, filled us with unutterable despair. As for Virginia, with a firm and dignified mien, she waved her hand, as if bidding us an eternal farewell.

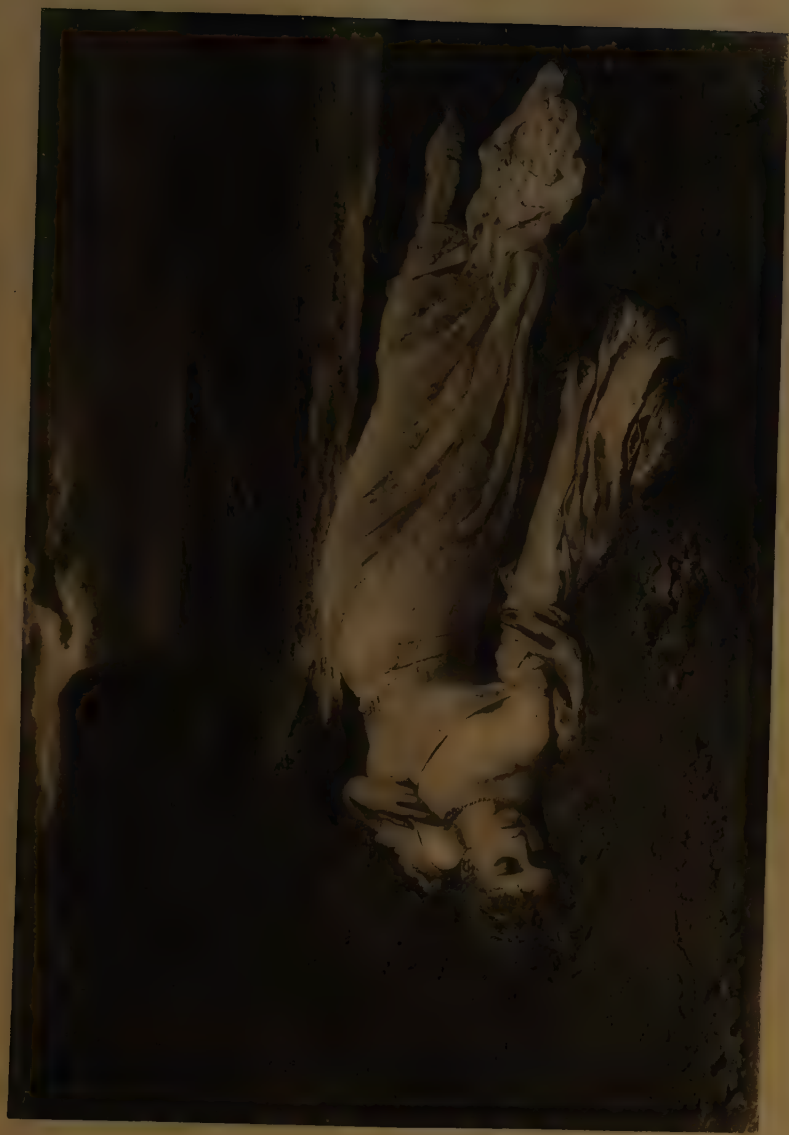
All the sailors had flung themselves into the sea, except one, who still remained upon the deck, and who was naked, and strong as Hercules. This man approached Virginia with respect, and, kneeling at her feet, attempted to force her to throw off her clothes; but she repulsed him with modesty, and turned away her head. Then were heard redoubled cries from the spectators: "Save her!—save her!—do not leave her!" But at that moment a mountain billow, of enormous magnitude, engulfed itself between the Isle of Amber and the coast, and menaced the shattered vessel, toward which it rolled bellowing, with its black sides and foaming head. At this terrible sight the sailor flung himself into the sea, and Virginia, seeing death inevitable, crossed her hands upon her breast, and raising upward her serene and beauteous eyes, seemed an angel prepared to take her flight to heaven.

Oh, day of horror! Alas! everything was swallowed up by the relentless billows. The surge threw some of the spectators, whom an impulse of humanity had prompted to advance toward Virginia, far upon the beach, and also the sailor who had endeavoured to save her life. This man, who had escaped from almost certain death, kneeling upon the sand, exclaimed: "Oh, my God! Thou hast saved my life, but I would have given it willingly for that excellent young lady, who persevered in not undressing herself as I had done." Domingo and

I drew the unfortunate Paul to the shore. He was senseless, and blood was flowing from his mouth and ears. The governor ordered him to be put into the hands of a surgeon, while we, on our part, wandered along the beach, in hopes that the sea would throw up the corpse of Virginia. But the wind having suddenly changed, as it frequently happens during hurricanes, our search was in vain; and we had the grief of thinking that we should not be able to bestow on this sweet and unfortunate girl the last sad duties. We retired from the spot overwhelmed with dismay, and our minds wholly occupied by one cruel loss, although numbers had perished in the wreck. Some of the spectators seemed tempted, from the fatal destiny of this virtuous girl, to doubt the existence of Providence; for there are in life such terrible, such unmerited evils, that even the hope of the wise is sometimes shaken.

In the meantime Paul, who began to recover his senses, was taken to a house in the neighbourhood, till he was in a fit state to be removed to his own home.

Thither I bent my way with Domingo, to discharge the melancholy duty of preparing Virginia's mother and her friend for the disastrous event which had happened. When we had reached the entrance of the valley of the river of Fan-Palms, some negroes informed us that the sea had thrown up many pieces of the wreck in the opposite bay. We descended toward it; and one of the first objects which struck my sight upon the beach was the corpse of Virginia. The body was half covered with sand, and preserved the attitude in which we had seen her perish. Her features were not sensibly changed; her eyes were closed, and her countenance was still serene; but the pale purple hues of death were blended on her cheek with the blush of virgin modesty. One of her hands was placed upon her clothes; and the other, which she held on her



heart, was fast closed, and so stiffened that it was with difficulty I took from its grasp a small box. How great was my emotion when I saw it contained the picture of Paul, which she had promised him never to part with while she lived! At the sight of this last mark of the fidelity and tenderness of the unfortunate girl, I wept bitterly. As for Domingo, he beat his breast, and pierced the air with his shrieks. With heavy hearts we then carried the body of Virginia to a fisherman's hut, and gave it in charge to some poor Malabar women, who carefully washed away the sand.

While they were employed in this melancholy office, we ascended the hill with trembling steps to the plantation. We found Madame de la Tour and Margaret at prayer, hourly expecting to have tidings from the ship. As soon as Madame de la Tour saw me coming, she eagerly cried, "Where is my daughter—my dear daughter—my child?" My silence and my tears apprised her of her misfortune. She was instantly seized with a convulsive stopping of the breath and agonizing pains, and her voice was only heard in sighs and groans. Margaret cried: "Where is my son? I do not see my son!"—and fainted. We ran to her assistance. In a short time she recovered, and being assured that Paul was safe, and under the care of the governor, she thought of nothing but of succouring her friend, who recovered from one fainting fit only to fall into another. Madame de la Tour passed the whole night in these cruel sufferings, and I became convinced that there was no sorrow like that of a mother. When she recovered her senses, she cast a fixed, unconscious look toward heaven. In vain her friend and myself pressed her hands in ours; in vain we called upon her by the most tender names; she appeared wholly insensible to these testimonials of our affection, and no

sound issued from her oppressed bosom but deep and hollow moans.

During the morning Paul was carried home in a palanquin. He had now recovered the use of his reason, but was unable to utter a word. His interview with his mother and Madame de la Tour, which I had dreaded, produced a better effect than all my cares. A ray of consolation gleamed on the countenance of the two unfortunate mothers. They pressed close to him, clasped him in their arms, and kissed him; their tears, which excess of anguish had till now dried up at the source, began to flow. Paul mixed his tears with theirs; and Nature having thus found relief, a long stupor succeeded the convulsive pangs they had suffered, and afforded them a lethargic repose, which was, in truth, like that of death.

Monsieur de la Bourdonnais sent to apprise me secretly that the corpse of Virginia had been borne to the town by his order, from whence it was to be transferred to the church of the Shaddock Grove. I immediately went down to Port Louis, where I found a multitude assembled from all parts of the island, in order to be present at the funeral solemnity, as if the isle had lost that which was nearest and dearest to it. The vessels in the harbour had their yards crossed, their flags half-mast, and fired guns at long intervals. A body of grenadiers led the funeral procession, with their muskets reversed, their muffled drums sending forth slow and dismal sounds. Dejection was depicted in the countenances of these warriors, who had so often braved death in battle without changing colour. Eight young ladies of considerable families of the island, dressed in white, and bearing palm branches in their hands, carried the corpse of their amiable companion, which was covered with flowers. They were followed by a chorus of children, chanting hymns,

and by the governor, his field officers, all the principal inhabitants of the island, and an immense crowd of people.

This imposing funeral solemnity had been ordered by the administration of the country, which was desirous of doing honour to the virtues of Virginia. But when the mournful procession arrived at the foot of this mountain, within sight of those cottages of which she had so long been an inmate and an ornament, diffusing happiness all around them, and which her loss had now filled with despair, the funeral pomp was interrupted, the hymns and anthems ceased, and the whole plain resounded with sighs and lamentations. Numbers of young girls ran from the neighbouring plantations to touch the coffin of Virginia with their handkerchiefs, and with chaplets and crowns of flowers, invoking her as a saint. Mothers asked of Heaven a child like Virginia; lovers, a heart as faithful; the poor, as tender a friend; and the slaves, as kind a mistress.

When the procession had reached the place of interment, some negresses of Madagascar and Caffres of Mosambique placed a number of baskets of fruit around the corpse and hung pieces of stuff upon the adjoining trees, according to the custom of their several countries. Some Indian women from Bengal, also, and from the coast of Malabar, brought cages full of small birds, which they set at liberty upon her coffin. Thus deeply did the loss of this amiable being affect the natives of different countries, and thus was the ritual of various religions performed over the tomb of unfortunate virtue.

It became necessary to place guards round her grave, and to employ gentle force in removing some of the daughters of the neighbouring villagers, who endeavoured to throw themselves into it, saying that they had no longer any consolation to hope for in this world, and

that nothing remained for them but to die with their benefactress.

On the western side of the church of the Shaddock Grove is a small copse of bamboos, where, in returning from mass with her mother and Margaret, Virginia loved to rest herself, seated by the side of him whom she then called her brother. This was the spot selected for her interment.

At his return from the funeral solemnity, Monsieur de la Bourdonnais came up here, followed by part of his numerous retinue. He offered Madame de la Tour and her friend all the assistance it was in his power to bestow. After briefly expressing his indignation at the conduct of her unnatural aunt, he advanced to Paul, and said everything which he thought most likely to soothe and console him. "Heaven is my witness," said he, "that I wish to insure your happiness, and that of your family. My dear friend, you must go to France: I will obtain a commission for you, and during your absence I will take the same care of your mother as if she were my own." He then offered him his hand; but Paul drew away, and turned his head aside, unable to bear his sight.

I remained for some time at the plantation of my unfortunate friends, that I might render to them and Paul those offices of friendship that were in my power, and which might alleviate, though they could not heal, the wounds of calamity. At the end of three weeks Paul was able to walk; but his mind seemed to droop in proportion as his body gathered strength. He was insensible to everything; his look was vacant; and when asked a question, he made no reply.

Madame de la Tour, who was dying, said to him often, "My son, while I look at you, I think I see my dear Virginia." At the name of Virginia he shuddered, and

hastened away from her, notwithstanding the entreaties of his mother, who begged him to come back to her friend. He used to go alone into the garden, and seat himself at the foot of Virginia's cocoa-tree, with his eyes fixed upon the fountain. The governor's surgeon, who had shown the most humane attention to Paul and the whole family, told us that, in order to cure the deep melancholy which had taken possession of his mind, we must allow him to do whatever he pleased, without contradiction: this, he said, afforded the only chance of overcoming the silence in which he persevered.

I resolved to follow this advice. The first use which Paul made of his returning strength was to absent himself from the plantation. Being determined not to lose sight of him, I set out immediately, and desired Domingo to take some provisions and accompany us. The young man's strength and spirits seemed renewed as he descended the mountain. He first took the road to the Shaddock Grove; and when he was near the church in the Alley of Bamboos, he walked directly to the spot where he saw some earth fresh turned up: kneeling down there, and raising his eyes to heaven, he offered up a long prayer. This appeared to me a favourable symptom of the return of his reason; since this mark of confidence in the Supreme Being showed that his mind was beginning to resume its natural functions. Domingo and I, following his example, fell upon our knees, and mingled our prayers with his. When he arose, he bent his way, paying little attention to us, toward the northern part of the island. As I knew that he was not only ignorant of the spot where the body of Virginia had been deposited, but even of the fact that it had been recovered from the waves, I asked him why he had offered up his prayer at the foot of those bamboos. He answered, "We have been there so often."

He continued his course until we reached the borders of the forest, when night came on. I set him the example of taking some nourishment, and prevailed on him to do the same; and we slept upon the grass at the foot of a tree. The next day I thought he seemed disposed to retrace his steps; for, after having gazed a considerable time from the plain upon the church of the Shaddock Grove, with its long avenues of bamboos, he made a movement as if to return home; but suddenly plunging into the forest, he directed his course toward the north. I guessed what was his design, and I endeavoured, but in vain, to dissuade him from it. About noon we arrived at the quarter of Golden Dust. He rushed down to the seashore, opposite to the spot where the Saint-Geran had been wrecked. At the sight of the Isle of Amber, and its channel, then smooth as a mirror, he exclaimed: "Virginia! oh, my dear Virginia!" and fell senseless.

Domingo and I carried him into the woods, where we had some difficulty in recovering him. As soon as he regained his senses, he wished to return to the seashore; but we conjured him not to renew his own anguish and ours by such cruel remembrances, and he took another direction. During a whole week he sought every spot where he had once wandered with the companion of his childhood. He traced the path by which she had gone to intercede for the slave of the Black River. He gazed again upon the banks of the river of the Three Breasts, where she had rested herself when unable to walk farther, and upon that part of the wood where they had lost their way. All the haunts, which recalled to his memory the anxieties, the sports, the repasts, the benevolence of her he loved—the river of the Sloping Mountain, my house, the neighbouring cascade, the papaw-tree she had

planted, the grassy fields in which she loved to run, the openings of the forest where she used to sing, all in succession called forth his tears; and those very echoes which had so often resounded with their mutual shouts of joy, now repeated only these accents of despair: "Virginia! oh, my dear Virginia!"

During this savage and wandering life his eyes became sunk and hollow, his skin assumed a yellow tint, and his health rapidly declined. Convinced that our present sufferings are rendered more acute by the bitter recollection of by-gone pleasures, and that the passions gather strength in solitude, I resolved to remove my unfortunate friend from those scenes which recalled the remembrance of his loss, and to lead him to a more busy part of the island. With this view, I conducted him to the inhabited part of the elevated quarter of Williams, which he had never visited, and where the busy pursuits of agriculture and commerce ever occasioned much bustle and variety. Numbers of carpenters were employed hewing down and squaring trees, while others were sawing them into planks; carriages were continually passing and repassing on the roads; numerous herds of oxen and troops of horses were feeding on those widespread meadows, and the whole country was dotted with the dwellings of man. On some spots the elevation of the soil permitted the culture of many of the plants of Europe: the yellow ears of ripe corn waved upon the plains; strawberry plants grew in the openings of the woods, and the roads were bordered by hedges of rose-trees. The freshness of the air, too, giving tension to the nerves, was favourable to the health of Europeans. From those heights, situated near the middle of the island, and surrounded by extensive forests, neither the sea, nor Port Louis, nor the church of the Shaddock Grove, nor any other object associated with

the remembrance of Virginia could be discerned. Even the mountains, which present various shapes on the side of Port Louis, appear from hence like a long promontory, in a straight and perpendicular line, from which arise lofty pyramids of rock, whose summits are enveloped in the clouds.

Conducting Paul to these scenes, I kept him continually in action, walking with him in rain and sunshine, by night and by day. I sometimes wandered with him into the depths of the forests, or led him over untilled grounds, hoping that change of scene and fatigue might divert his mind from its gloomy meditations. But the soul of a lover finds everywhere the traces of the beloved object. Night and day, the calm of solitude and the tumult of crowds, are to him the same; time itself, which casts the shade of oblivion over so many other remembrances, in vain would tear that tender and sacred recollection from the heart. The needle, when touched by the loadstone, however it may have been moved from its position, is no sooner left to repose than it turns to the pole of its attraction. So, when I inquired of Paul, as we wandered amid the plains of Williams, "Where shall we now go?" he pointed to the north, and said: "Yonder are our mountains; let us return home."

I now saw that all the means I took to divert him from his melancholy were fruitless, and that no resource was left but an attempt to combat his passion by the arguments which reason suggested. I answered him: "Yes, there are the mountains where once dwelt your beloved Virginia; and here is the picture you gave her, and which she held, when dying, to her heart, that heart which even in its last moments only beat for you." I then presented to Paul the little portrait which he had given to Virginia on the borders of the cocoa-tree fountain. At this sight

a gloomy joy overspread his countenance. He eagerly seized the picture with his feeble hands, and held it to his lips. His oppressed bosom seemed ready to burst with emotion, and his eyes were filled with tears which had no power to flow.

“My son,” said I, “listen to one who is your friend, who was the friend of Virginia, and who, in the bloom of your hopes, has often endeavoured to fortify your mind against the unforeseen accidents of life. What do you deplore with so much bitterness? Is it your own misfortunes, or those of Virginia, which affect you so deeply?”

“Your own misfortunes are indeed severe. You have lost the most amiable of girls, who would have grown up to womanhood a pattern to her sex; one who sacrificed her own interest to yours, who preferred you to all that fortune could bestow, and considered you as the only recompense worthy of her virtues. But might not this very object, from whom you expected the purest happiness, have proved to you a source of the most cruel distress? She had returned poor and disinherited: all you could henceforth have partaken with her was your labour. Rendered more delicate by her education, and more courageous by her misfortunes, you might have beheld her every day sinking beneath her efforts to share and lighten your fatigues. Had she brought you children, they would only have served to increase her anxieties and your own, from the difficulties of sustaining at once your aged parents and your infant family.

“Very likely you will tell me that the governor would have helped you; but how do you know that in a colony whose governors are so frequently changed you would have had others like Monsieur de la Bourdonnais?—that one might not have been sent destitute of good feeling and of morality?—that your young wife, in order to pro-

cure some miserable pittance, might not have been obliged to seek his favour? Had she been weak, you would have been to be pitied; and if she had remained virtuous, you would have continued poor; forced even to consider yourself fortunate if, on account of the beauty and virtue of your wife, you had not to endure persecution from those who had promised you protection.

“It would still have remained to you, you may say, to have enjoyed a pleasure independent of fortune—that of protecting a beloved being, who, in proportion to her own helplessness, had more attached herself to you. You may fancy that your pains and sufferings would have served to endear you to each other, and that your passion would have gathered strength from your mutual misfortunes. Undoubtedly virtuous love does find consolation even in such melancholy retrospects. But Virginia is no more; yet those persons still live whom, next to yourself, she held most dear—her mother, and your own; your inconsolable affliction is bringing them both to the grave. Place your happiness, as she did hers, in affording them succour.

“My son! beneficence is the happiness of the virtuous; there is no other greater or more certain enjoyment on the earth. Schemes of pleasure, repose, luxuries, wealth, and glory are not suited to man, weak, wandering, and transitory as he is. See how rapidly one step toward the acquisition of fortune has precipitated us all to the lowest abyss of misery! You were opposed to it, it is true; but who would not have thought that Virginia’s voyage would terminate in her happiness and your own? An invitation from a rich and aged relation, the advice of a wise governor, the approbation of the whole colony, and the well-advised authority of her confessor, decided the lot of Virginia. Thus do we run to our ruin,

deceived even by the prudence of those who watch over us. It would be better, no doubt, not to believe them, nor even to listen to the voice or lean on the hopes of a deceitful world. But all men—those you see occupied in these plains, those who go abroad to seek their fortunes, and those in Europe who enjoy repose from the labours of others, are liable to reverses: not one is secure from losing, at some period, all that he most values—greatness, wealth, wife, children, and friends. Most of these would have their sorrow increased by the remembrance of their own imprudence. But you have nothing with which you can reproach yourself. You have been faithful in your love. In the bloom of youth, by not departing from the dictates of Nature, you evinced the wisdom of a sage. Your views were just, because they were pure, simple, and disinterested. You had, besides, on Virginia, sacred claims which nothing could countervail. You have lost her; but it is neither your own imprudence, nor your avarice, nor your false wisdom which has occasioned this misfortune, but the will of God, who has employed the passions of others to snatch from you the object of your love; God, from whom you derive everything, who knows what is most fitting for you, and whose wisdom has not left you any cause for the repentance and despair which succeed the calamities that are brought upon us by ourselves.

“Vainly, in your misfortunes, do you say to yourself, ‘I have not deserved them.’ Is it then the calamity of Virginia—her death, and her present condition, that you deplore? She has undergone the fate allotted to all—to high birth, to beauty, and even to empires themselves. The life of man, with all his projects, may be compared to a tower, at whose summit is death. When your Virginia was born, she was condemned to die; happily for

herself, she is released from life before losing her mother, or yours, or you; saved, thus, from undergoing pangs worse than those of death itself.

“Learn then, my son, that death is a benefit to all men: it is the night of that restless day we call by the name of life. The diseases, the griefs, the vexations, and the fears, which perpetually embitter our life as long as we possess it, molest us no more in the sleep of death. If you inquire into the history of those men who appear to have been the happiest, you will find that they have bought their apparent felicity very dear: public consideration, perhaps, by domestic evils; fortune, by the loss of health; the rare happiness of being beloved, by continual sacrifices; and often, at the expiration of a life devoted to the good of others, they see themselves surrounded only by false friends and ungrateful relations. But Virginia was happy to her very last moment. When with us, she was happy in partaking of the gifts of Nature; when far from us, she found enjoyment in the practice of virtue; and even at the terrible moment in which we saw her perish, she still had cause for self-gratulation. For, whether she cast her eyes on the assembled colony, made miserable by her expected loss, or on you, my son, who, with so much intrepidity, were endeavouring to save her, she must have seen how dear she was to all. Her mind was fortified against the future by the remembrance of her innocent life; and at that moment she received the reward which Heaven reserves for virtue—a courage superior to danger. She met death with a serene countenance.

“My son! God gives all the trials of life to virtue, in order to show that virtue alone can support them, and even find in them happiness and glory. When he designs for it an illustrious reputation, he exhibits it on a wide

theatre, and contending with death. Then does the courage of virtue shine forth as an example, and the misfortunes to which it has been exposed receive forever, from posterity, the tribute of their tears. This is the immortal monument reserved for virtue in a world where everything else passes away, and where the names, even of the greater number of kings themselves, are soon buried in eternal oblivion.

“Meanwhile, Virginia still exists. My son, you see that everything changes on this earth, but that nothing is ever lost. No art of man can annihilate the smallest particle of matter; can, then, that which has possessed reason, sensibility, affection, virtue, and religion be supposed capable of destruction, when the very elements with which it is clothed are imperishable? Ah! however happy Virginia may have been with us, she is now much more so. There is a God, my son; it is unnecessary for me to prove it to you, for the voice of all Nature loudly proclaims it. The wickedness of mankind leads them to deny the existence of a Being whose justice they fear. But your mind is fully convinced of his existence, while his works are ever before your eyes. Do you then believe that he would leave Virginia without recompense? Do you think that the same power which inclosed her noble soul in a form so beautiful—so like an emanation from itself, could not have saved her from the waves?—that he who has ordained the happiness of man here, by laws unknown to you, can not prepare a still higher degree of felicity for Virginia by other laws of which you are equally ignorant? Before we were born into this world, could we, do you imagine, even if we were capable of thinking at all, have formed any idea of our existence here? And now that we are in the midst of this gloomy and transitory life, can we foresee what is beyond the

tomb, or in what manner we shall be emancipated from it? Does God, like man, need this little globe, the earth, as a theatre for the display of his intelligence and his goodness?—and can he only dispose of human life in the territory of death? There is not, in the entire ocean, a single drop of water which is not peopled with living beings appertaining to man: and does there exist nothing for him in the heavens above his head? What! is there no supreme intelligence, no divine goodness, except on this little spot where we are placed? In those innumerable glowing fires, in those infinite fields of light which surround them, and which neither storms nor darkness can extinguish, is there nothing but empty space and an eternal void? If we, weak and ignorant as we are, might dare to assign limits to that Power from whom we have received everything, we might possibly imagine that we were placed on the very confines of his empire, where life is perpetually struggling with death, and innocence forever in danger from the power of tyranny!

“Somewhere, then, without doubt, there is another world where virtue will receive its reward. Virginia is now happy. Ah! if from the abode of angels she could hold communication with you, she would tell you, as she did when she bade you her last adieus: ‘O Paul, life is but a scene of trial. I have been obedient to the laws of Nature, love, and virtue. I crossed the seas to obey the will of my relations; I sacrificed wealth in order to keep my faith; and I preferred the loss of life to disobeying the dictates of modesty. Heaven found that I had fulfilled my duties, and has snatched me forever from all the miseries I might have endured myself, and all I might have felt for the miseries of others. I am placed far above the reach of all human evils, and you pity me! I am become pure and unchangeable as a particle of light, and

you would recall me to the darkness of human life! O Paul! O my beloved friend! recollect those days of happiness, when in the morning we felt the delightful sensations excited by the unfolding beauties of Nature; when we seemed to rise with the sun to the peaks of those rocks, and then to spread with his rays over the bosom of the forests. We experienced a delight, the cause of which we could not comprehend. In the innocence of our desires, we wished to be all sight, to enjoy the rich colours of the early dawn; all smell, to taste a thousand perfumes at once; all hearing, to listen to the singing of our birds; and all heart, to be capable of gratitude for these mingled blessings. Now, at the source of the beauty whence flows all that is delightful upon earth, my soul intuitively sees, tastes, hears, touches what before she could only be made sensible of through the medium of our weak organs. Ah! what language can describe these shores of eternal bliss, which I inhabit forever? All that infinite power and heavenly goodness could create to console the unhappy: all that the friendship of numberless beings exulting in the same felicity can impart, we enjoy in unmixed perfection. Support, then, the trial which is now allotted to you, that you may heighten the happiness of your Virginia by love which will know no termination—by a union which will be eternal. There I will calm your regrets, I will wipe away your tears. Oh, my beloved friend! my youthful husband! raise your thoughts toward the infinite to enable you to support the evils of a moment.’”

My own emotion choked my utterance. Paul, looking at me steadfastly, cried: “She is no more! she is no more!” and a long fainting fit succeeded these words of woe. When restored to himself, he said, “Since death is a good, and since Virginia is happy, I will die too, and be united to Virginia.” Thus the motives of consolation

I had offered only served to nourish his despair. I was in the situation of a man who attempts to save a friend sinking in the midst of a flood, and who obstinately refuses to swim. Sorrow had completely overwhelmed his soul. Alas! the trials of early years prepare man for the afflictions of after-life; but Paul had never experienced any.

I took him back to his own dwelling, where I found his mother and Madame de la Tour in a state of increased languor and exhaustion, but Margaret seemed to droop the most. Lively characters, upon whom petty troubles have but little effect, sink the soonest under great calamities.

"O my good friend," said Margaret, "I thought last night I saw Virginia, dressed in white, in the midst of groves and delicious gardens. She said to me, 'I enjoy the most perfect happiness'; and then approaching Paul with a smiling air, she bore him away with her. While I was struggling to retain my son, I felt that I myself too was quitting the earth, and that I followed with inexpressible delight. I then wished to bid my friend farewell, when I saw that she was hastening after me, accompanied by Mary and Domingo. But the strangest circumstance remains yet to be told: Madame de la Tour has this very night had a dream exactly like mine in every possible respect."

"My dear friend," I replied, "nothing, I firmly believe, happens in this world without the permission of God. Future events, too, are sometimes revealed in dreams."

Madame de la Tour then related to me her dream, which was exactly the same as Margaret's in every particular; and as I had never observed in either of these ladies any propensity to superstition, I was struck with the singular coincidence of their dreams, and I felt convinced

that they would soon be realized. The belief that future events are sometimes revealed to us during sleep is one that is widely diffused among the nations of the earth. The greatest men of antiquity have had faith in it, among whom may be mentioned Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, the Scipios, the two Catos, and Brutus, none of whom were weak-minded persons. Both the Old and the New Testament furnish us with numerous instances of dreams that came to pass. As for myself, I need only, on this subject, appeal to my own experience, as I have more than once had good reason to believe that superior intelligences, who interest themselves in our welfare, communicate with us in these visions of the night. Things which surpass the light of human reason can not be proved by arguments derived from that reason; but still, if the mind of man is an image of that of God, since man can make known his will to the ends of the earth by secret missives, may not the Supreme Intelligence which governs the universe employ similar means to attain a like end? One friend consoles another by a letter, which, after passing through many kingdoms, and being in the hands of various individuals at enmity with each other, brings at last joy and hope to the breast of a single human being. May not in like manner the Sovereign Protector of innocence come, in some secret way, to the help of a virtuous soul, which puts its trust in him alone? Has he occasion to employ visible means to effect his purpose in this, whose ways are hidden in all his ordinary works?

Why should we doubt the evidence of dreams? for what is our life, occupied as it is with vain and fleeting imaginations, other than a prolonged vision of the night?

Whatever may be thought of this in general, on the present occasion the dreams of my friends were soon realized. Paul expired two months after the death of his

Virginia, whose name dwelt on his lips in his expiring moments. About a week after the death of her son, Margaret saw her last hour approach with that serenity which virtue only can feel. She bade Madame de la Tour a most tender farewell, "in the certain hope," she said, "of a delightful and eternal reunion. Death is the greatest of blessings to us," added she, "and we ought to desire it. If life be a punishment, we should wish for its termination; if it be a trial, we should be thankful that it is short."

The governor took care of Domingo and Mary, who were no longer able to labour, and who survived their mistresses but a short time. As for poor Fidele, he pined to death soon after he had lost his master.

I afforded an asylum in my dwelling to Madame de la Tour, who bore up under her calamities with incredible elevation of mind. She had endeavoured to console Paul and Margaret till their last moments, as if she herself had no misfortunes of her own to bear. When they were no more, she used to talk to me every day of them as of beloved friends, who were still living near her. She survived them, however, but one month. Far from reproaching her aunt for the afflictions she had caused, her benign spirit prayed to God to pardon her, and to appease that remorse which we heard began to torment her as soon as she had sent Virginia away with so much inhumanity.

Conscience, that certain punishment of the guilty, visited with all its terrors the mind of this unnatural relation. So great was her torment that life and death became equally insupportable to her. Sometimes she reproached herself with the untimely fate of her lovely niece, and with the death of her mother which had immediately followed it. At other times she congratulated herself for having repulsed far from her two wretched creatures who, she said, had both dishonoured their family

by their grovelling inclinations. Sometimes, at the sight of the many miserable objects with which Paris abounds, she would fly into a rage and exclaim, "Why are not these idle people sent off to the colonies?" As for the notions of humanity, virtue, and religion adopted by all nations, she said, they were only the inventions of their rulers, to serve political purposes. Then, flying all at once to the other extreme, she abandoned herself to superstitious terrors, which filled her with mortal fears. She would then give abundant alms to the wealthy ecclesiastics who governed her, beseeching them to appease the wrath of God by the sacrifice of her fortune—as if the offering to him of the wealth she had withheld from the miserable could please her Heavenly Father! In her imagination she often beheld fields of fire, with burning mountains, wherein hideous spectres wandered about, loudly calling on her by name. She threw herself at her confessor's feet, imagining every description of agony and torture; for Heaven—just Heaven—always sends to the cruel the most frightful views of religion and a future state.

Atheist, thus, and fanatic in turn, holding both life and death in equal horror, she lived on for several years. But what completed the torments of her miserable existence was that very object to which she had sacrificed every natural affection. She was deeply annoyed at perceiving that her fortune must go, at her death, to relations whom she hated, and she determined to alienate as much of it as she could. They, however, taking advantage of her frequent attacks of low spirits, caused her to be secluded as a lunatic, and her affairs to be put into the hands of trustees. Her wealth thus completed her ruin; and as the possession of it had hardened her own heart, so did its anticipation corrupt the hearts of those who coveted it

from her. At length she died; and to crown her misery, she retained reason enough at last to be sensible that she was plundered and despised by the very persons whose opinions had been her rule of conduct during her whole life.

On the same spot and at the foot of the same shrubs as his Virginia was deposited the body of Paul; and round about them lie the remains of their tender mothers and their faithful servants. No marble marks the spot of their humble graves—no inscription records their virtues; but their memory is engraven in indelible characters upon the hearts of those whom they have befriended. Their spirits have no need of the pomp which they shunned during their life; but if they still take an interest in what passes upon earth, they no doubt love to wander beneath the roofs of these humble dwellings, inhabited by industrious virtue, to console poverty discontented with its lot, to cherish in the hearts of lovers the sacred flame of fidelity, and to inspire a taste for the blessings of Nature, a love of honest labour, and a dread of the allurements of riches.

The voice of the people which is often silent with regard to the monuments raised to kings, has given to some parts of this island names which will immortalize the loss of Virginia. Near the Isle of Amber, in the midst of sand-banks, is a spot called The Pass of the Saint-Geran, from the name of the vessel which was there lost. The extremity of that point of land which you see yonder, three leagues off, half covered with water, and which the Saint-Geran could not double the night before the hurricane, is called The Cape of Misfortune; and before us, at the end of the valley, is the Bay of the Tomb, where Virginia was found buried in the sand; as if the waves had sought to restore her corpse to her family, that they might

render it the last sad duties on those shores where so many years of her innocent life had been passed.

Joined thus in death, ye faithful lovers, who were so tenderly united! unfortunate mothers! beloved family! these woods which sheltered you with their foliage—these fountains which flowed for you—these hill-sides upon which you reposed, still deplore your loss!

No one has since presumed to cultivate that desolate spot of land, or to rebuild those humble cottages. Your goats are become wild; your orchards are destroyed; your birds are all fled, and nothing is heard but the cry of the sparrow-hawk as it skims in quest of prey around this rocky basin. As for myself, since I have ceased to behold you, I have felt friendless and alone, like a father bereft of his children, or a traveller who wanders by himself over the face of the earth.

Ending with these words, the good old man retired, bathed in tears; and my own, too, had flowed more than once during this melancholy recital.

END OF PAUL AND VIRGINIA

UNDINE—SINTRAM

Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué
Undine — Sintram

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Undine, or the Water-Spirit. Sintram and his Companions

By
Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué

Translated by Thomas Tracy

With a Critical and Biographical Introduction
by Rossiter Johnson

Illustrated



New York
D. Appleton and Company
1899

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FOUQUÉ'S ALLEGORIES

IT might be said of the figure of allegory as Byron said of the Italian language, that it is one of the easiest of which to get a smattering and one of the hardest to master. Of writers in our own language, hardly more than three have been so successful with it as to produce classic work—Spenser, Bunyan, and Hawthorne. Fouqué's "Undine" and "Sintram" are among the most notable examples in any language.

Friedrich Heinrich Karl, Baron de la Motte Fouqué, was a native of Brandenburg, where he was born February 12, 1777. His ancestors were Huguenots, and his grandfather served as a Prussian general in the Seven Years' War. The romancer served in the Prussian cavalry in the campaigns of 1794 and 1813, in the latter of which fought and fell another famous author, Körner. Fouqué was wounded in the fierce action at Kulm, and participated in the great battle of Leipsic. Between the two campaigns he devoted himself to literature, and after the wars he lived alternately on his estate at Neunhausen and in Paris. In 1830 he took up his residence in Halle. He died in Berlin, January 23, 1843.

Fouqué's first considerable publication, "Dramatic Works" (1801), was under the assumed name of Pellegrin. He was devoted to the study of Norse legend and the ancient poetry of France and Germany, and was an admirer of the Christian chivalry of the middle ages. "Undine" was published in 1811. Coleridge said of it: "Undine is

a most exquisite work. It shows the general want of any sense for the fine and subtle, in the public taste, that this romance made no deep impression. Undine's character before she receives a soul is marvellously beautiful." He ranked this romance above those of Scott, saying that it presented "an absolutely new idea."

Coleridge's complaint of the public taste appears to have been a little premature, though it may have seemed justified at the time he wrote. He died in 1834. A few years later Fouqué's romances were translated into English in rapid succession, and some of them—notably "Undine"—have been rendered into many European languages. From that time they have held their place among the classics whose life does not depend upon the tongue in which they are presented. Readers who enjoy that kind of stories at all generally hold those of Fouqué in affectionate admiration, reading and re-reading them. He probably had more of such readers in the generation that has just passed away than among those who now constitute the story-reading public. Though with the majority "Undine" holds the first place, there are many in whose estimation "Sintram and his Companions" ranks above it. Next to these comes "Aslauga's Knight." Fouqué's other romances include "The Two Captains," "Sigurd," "The Magic Ring," and "Thiodulf the Ice-lander." Fouqué published a definitive edition of his works, in twelve volumes, at Halle, in 1841. His second wife, Karoline, who was born in 1773 and died in 1831, was well known as a novelist.

Mr. Tracy's translations, which are used in this volume, were among the first, one at least being made as early as 1835. But he carefully revised them, keeping as close to the original as the difference in the languages would permit; and they have been still further revised for the present edition.

R. J.

DEDICATION

VISION of beauty, dear Undine,
Since led by storied light,
I found you, mystic sprite,
How soothing to my heart your voice has been !

You press beside me, angel mild,
Soft breathing all your woes,
And winning brief repose,—
A wayward, tender, timid child.

Still my guitar has caught the tone,
And from its gate of gold
Your whispered sorrows rolled,
Till through the world their sound is flown.

And many hearts your sweetness love,
Though strange your freaks and state,
And while I sing your fate,
The wild and wondrous tale approve.

Now would they warmly, one and all,
Your fortunes trace anew :
Then, sweet, your way pursue,
And, fearless, enter bower and hall.

Greet noble knights with homage due ;
But greet, all trusting there,
The lovely German fair :
“ Welcome,” they cry, “ the maiden true ! ”

And if toward me one dart a glance,
Say, “ He’s a loyal knight,
Who serves you, ladies bright,—
Guitar and sword,—at tourney, feast, and dance.”

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UNDINE



I

ONCE on a beautiful evening, it may be many hundred years ago, a worthy old fisherman sat before his door mending his nets. The corner of the world where he dwelt was exceedingly picturesque. The green turf on which he had built his cottage ran far out into a great lake; and this slip of verdure appeared to stretch into it as much through love of its clear waters, blue and bright, as the lake, moved by a like impulse, strove to fold the meadow, with its waving grass and flowers and the cooling shade of the trees, in its fond embrace. Such were the freshness and beauty of both that they seemed to be drawn toward each other, and the one to be visiting the other as a guest.

With respect to human beings, indeed, in this pleasant spot, excepting the fisherman and his family, there were few or none to be met with. For in the background of the scene, toward the west and northwest, lay a forest of extraordinary wildness, which, owing to its gloom and its being almost impassable, as well as to fear of the strange creatures and visionary forms to be encountered there, most people avoided entering, unless in cases of extreme necessity. The pious old fisherman, however, many times passed through it without harm, when he carried the fine

fish, which he caught near his beautiful strip of land, to a great city only a short distance beyond the extensive forest.

The reason he was able to go through this wood with so much ease may have been chiefly this, that he entertained scarcely any thoughts but such as were of a religious nature; and, besides, every time he crossed the evil-reported shades, he used to sing some holy song with a clear voice and from a sincere heart.

While he sat by his nets this evening, neither fearing nor devising evil, a sudden terror seized him, as he heard a rushing in the darkness of the wood, which resembled the trampling of a mounted steed, and the noise every instant drew nearer and nearer to his little territory.

What he had dreamed in his reveries, when abroad in many a stormy night, respecting the mysteries of the forest, now flashed through his mind in a moment; especially the figure of a man of gigantic stature and snow-white appearance, who kept nodding his head in a portentous manner. Yet, when he raised his eyes toward the wood, the form came before him in perfect distinctness, as he saw the nodding man burst forth from the mazy web-work of leaves and branches. But he immediately felt emboldened when he reflected that nothing to give him alarm had ever befallen him even in the forest; and, moreover, that on this open neck of land the evil spirit, it was likely, would be still less daring in the exercise of its power. At the same time he prayed aloud with the most earnest sincerity of devotion, repeating a passage of the Bible. This inspired him with fresh courage; and soon perceiving the illusion, the strange mistake into which his imagination had betrayed him, he could with difficulty refrain from laughing. The white, nodding figure he had seen became transformed in the

twinkling of an eye to what in reality it was—a small brook, long and familiarly known to him, which ran foaming from the forest, and discharged itself into the lake.

But what had caused the startling sound was a knight, arrayed in sumptuous apparel, who beneath the shadows of the trees came riding toward the cottage. His doublet was of dark violet, embroidered with gold, and his scarlet cloak hung gracefully over it; on his cap of burnished gold waved red and violet plumes, and in his golden shoulder-belt flashed a sword, richly ornamented and extremely beautiful. The white barb that bore the knight was more slenderly built than war-horses usually are; and he touched the turf with a step so light and elastic that the green and flower-woven carpet seemed hardly to receive the slightest break from his tread. The old fisherman, notwithstanding, did not feel perfectly secure, although he was forced to believe that no evil could be feared from an appearance so prepossessing; and therefore, as good manners dictated, he took off his hat on the knight's coming near, and quietly remained by the side of his nets.

When the stranger stopped, and asked whether he with his horse could have shelter and entertainment there for the night, the fisherman returned answer: "As to your horse, fair sir, I have no better stable for him than this shady meadow, and no better provender than the grass that is growing here. But with respect to yourself, you shall be welcome to our humble cottage, and to the best supper and lodging we are able to give you."

The knight was well contented with this reception; and alighting from his horse, which his host assisted him to relieve from saddle and bridle, he let him hasten away to the fresh pasture, and thus spoke:

"Even had I found you less hospitable and kindly disposed, my worthy old friend, you would still, I suspect, hardly have got rid of me to-day; for here, I perceive, a broad lake lies before us, and as to riding back into that wood of wonders, with the shades of evening deepening around me, may Heaven in its grace preserve me from the thought!"

"Pray, not a word of the wood, or of returning into it!" said the fisherman, and took his guest into the cottage.

There, beside the hearth, from which a frugal fire was diffusing its light through the clean, dusky room, sat the fisherman's aged wife in a great chair. At the entrance of their noble guest she rose and gave him a courteous welcome, but sat down again in her seat of honour, not making the slightest offer of it to the stranger. Upon this the fisherman said with a smile:

"You must not be offended with her, young gentleman, because she has not given up to you the best chair in the house; it is a custom among poor people to look upon this as the privilege of the aged."

"Why, husband!" cried the old lady with a quiet smile, "where can your wits be wandering? Our guest, to say the least of him, must belong to a Christian country, and how is it possible then that a young man so well bred as he appears to be could dream of driving old people from their chairs?—Take a seat, my young master," she continued, turning to the knight; "there is still quite a snug little chair across the room there, only be careful not to shove it about too roughly, for one of its legs, I fear, is none of the firmest."

The knight brought up the seat as carefully as she could desire, and good-humouredly sat down upon it; while it seemed to him, for a moment, that he must be

somehow related to this little household, and have just returned home from abroad.

These three worthy people now began to converse in the most friendly and familiar manner. In relation to the forest, indeed, concerning which the knight occasionally made some inquiries, the old man chose to know but little; at any rate, he was of opinion that slightly touching upon it, at this hour of twilight, was most suitable and safe; but of the cares and comforts of their home and their business abroad, the aged couple spoke more freely, and listened also with eager curiosity, as the knight recounted to them his travels, and how he had a castle near one of the sources of the Danube, and that his name was Sir Huldbrand of Ringstetten.

The stranger, while they were in the midst of their talk, had been aware at times of a splash against the little low window, as if some one were dashing water against it. The old man, every time he heard the noise, knit his brows with vexation; but at last, when the sweep of a shower came pouring like a torrent against the panes, and bubbling through the decayed frame into the room, he started up indignant, rushed to the window, and cried with a threatening voice:

“Undine! will you never leave off these fooleries—not even to-day, when we have a stranger-knight with us in the cottage?”

All without now became still; only a low titter was just perceptible, and the fisherman said, as he came back to his seat:

“You will have the goodness, my honoured guest, to pardon this freak, and it may be a multitude more, but she has no thought of evil or anything improper. This mischievous Undine, to confess the truth, is our adopted daughter, and she stoutly refuses to give over this frolic-

some childishness of hers, although she has entered her eighteenth year. But in spite of this, as I said before, she is at heart one of the very best children in the world."

"You may say so," broke in the old lady, shaking her head, "you can give a better account of her than I can. When you return home from fishing, or from selling your fish in the city, you may think her frolics very delightful. But to have her figuring about you the whole day long, and never, from morning to night, to hear her speak one word of sense; and then, as she grows older, instead of having any help from her in the family, to find her a continual cause of anxiety, lest her wild humours should completely ruin us—that is quite a different affair, and enough at last to weary out the patience even of a saint."

"Well, well," replied the master of the house, with a smile, "you have your trials with Undine, and I have mine with the lake. The lake often beats down my dams, and breaks the meshes of my nets, but for all that I have a strong affection for it; and so have you, in spite of your mighty crosses and vexations, for our nice pretty little child. Is it not true?"

"One can not be very angry with her," answered the old lady, as she gave her husband an approving smile.

That instant the door flew open, and a girl of slender form, almost a miniature of woman, her hair flaxen and her complexion fair—in one word, a blonde-like miracle of beauty—slipped laughing in, and said:

"You have only been making a mock of me, father; for where now is the guest you mentioned?"

The same moment, however, she perceived the knight also, and in fixed astonishment continued standing before the comely young man. Huldbbrand was charmed with her graceful figure, and viewed her lovely features with the more intense interest, as he imagined it was only her

surprise that permitted him to have the opportunity, and that she would soon turn away from his gaze with increased bashfulness. But the event was the very reverse of what he expected. For after regarding him a long while she felt more confidence, moved nearer, knelt before him, and, while she played with a gold medal, which he wore attached to a rich chain on his breast, exclaimed:

"Why, you beautiful, you friendly guest! how have you reached our poor cottage at last? Have you been obliged, for years and years, to wander about the world, before you could catch one glimpse of our nook? Do you come out of that wild forest, my lovely friend?"

The old woman was so prompt in her reproof as to allow him no time to answer. She commanded the maiden to rise, show better manners, and go to her work. But Undine, without making any reply, drew a little footstool near Huldbrand's chair, sat down upon it with her netting, and said in a gentle tone:

"I will work here."

The old man did as parents are apt to do with children to whom they have been over-indulgent. He affected to observe nothing of Undine's strange behaviour, and was beginning to talk about something else. But this was what the little girl would not suffer him to do. She broke in upon him:

"I have asked our kind guest whence he has come among us, and he has not yet answered me."

"I come out of the forest, you lovely little vision," Huldbrand returned, and she spoke again:

"You must also tell me how you came to enter that forest, so feared and shunned, and the marvellous adventures you met with there; for there is no escaping, I guess, without something of this kind."

Huldbrand felt a slight shudder, on remembering what

he had witnessed, and looked involuntarily toward the window; for it seemed to him that one of the strange shapes which had come upon him in the forest must be there grinning in through the glass; but he discerned nothing except the deep darkness of night, which had now enveloped the whole prospect. Upon this, he became more collected, and was just on the point of beginning his account when the old man interrupted him:

“Not so, Sir Knight; this is by no means a fit hour for such relations.”

But Undine, in a state of high excitement, sprang up from her little cricket, braced her beautiful arms against her sides, and cried, placing herself directly before the fisherman:

“He shall not tell his story, father? he shall not? But it is my will—he shall!—he shall, stop him who may!”

Thus speaking, she stamped her neat little foot vehemently on the floor, but all with an air of such comic and good-humoured simplicity that Huldbrand now found it quite as hard to withdraw his gaze from her wild emotion as he had before from her gentleness and beauty. The old man, on the contrary, burst out in unrestrained displeasure. He severely reprovèd Undine for her disobedience and her unbecoming carriage toward the stranger, and his good old wife joined him in harping on the same string.

By these rebukes Undine was only excited the more. “If you want to quarrel with me,” she cried, “and will not let me hear what I so much desire, then sleep alone in your smoky old hut!” And swift as an arrow she shot from the door, and vanished amid the darkness of the night.

II

HULDBRAND and the fisherman sprang from their seats, and were rushing to stop the angry girl; but before they could reach the cottage door she had disappeared in the cloudlike obscurity without, and no sound, not so much even as that of her light footstep, betrayed the course she had taken. Huldbrand threw a glance of inquiry toward his host: it almost seemed to him as if his whole interview with a sweet apparition, which had so suddenly plunged again into the night, were no other than a continuation of the wonderful forms that had just played their mad pranks with him in the forest; but the old man muttered between his teeth:

"This is not the first time she has treated us in this manner. Now must our hearts be filled with anxiety, and our eyes find no sleep, the livelong night; for who can assure us, in spite of her past escapes, that she will not some time or other come to harm if she thus continue out in the dark and alone until daylight?"

"Then pray, for God's sake, father, let us follow her!" cried Huldbrand anxiously.

"Wherefore should we?" replied the old man; "it would be a sin were I to suffer you, all alone, to search after the foolish girl amid the lonesomeness of night; and my old limbs would fail to carry me to this wild rover, even if I knew to what place she has hurried off."

"Still we ought at least to call after her, and beg her to return," said Huldbrand; and he began to call in tones of earnest entreaty: "Undine! Undine! come back, pray come back!"

The old man shook his head, and said: "All your shouting, however loud and long, will be of no avail; you know not as yet, Sir Knight, what a self-willed thing the

little wilding is." But still, even hoping against hope, he could not himself cease calling out every minute, amid the gloom of night: "Undine! ah, dear Undine! I beseech you, pray come back—only this once."

It turned out, however, exactly as the fisherman had said. No Undine could they hear or see; and as the old man would on no account consent that Huldbrand should go in quest of the fugitive, they were both obliged at last to return into the cottage. There they found the fire on the hearth almost gone out, and the mistress of the house, who took Undine's flight and danger far less to heart than her husband, had already gone to rest. The old man blew up the coals, put on dry wood, and by means of the renewed flame hunted for a jug of wine, which he brought and set between himself and his guest.

"You, Sir Knight, as well as I," said he, "are anxious on the silly girl's account, and it would be better, I think, to spend part of the night in chatting and drinking than to keep turning and turning on our rush-mats, and trying in vain to sleep. What is your opinion?"

Huldbrand was well pleased with the plan; the fisherman pressed him to take the vacant seat of honour, its worthy occupant having now left it for her couch; and they relished their beverage and enjoyed their chat, as two such good men and true ever ought to do. To be sure, whenever the slightest thing moved before the windows, or at times when just nothing at all was moving, one of them would look up and exclaim, "There she comes!" Then would they continue silent a few moments, and afterward, when nothing appeared, would shake their heads, breathe out a sigh, and go on with their talk.

But as neither of them could think of anything except Undine, the best plan they could devise was, that the old fisherman should relate, and the knight should hear, in

what manner Undine had come to the cottage. So the fisherman began:

"It is about fifteen years since I one day crossed the wild forest with fish for the city market. My wife had remained at home, as she was wont to do; and at this time for a reason of more than common interest; for although we were beginning to feel the advances of age, God had bestowed upon us an infant of wonderful beauty. It was a little girl, and we already began to ask ourselves the question, whether we ought not, for the advantage of the newcomer, to quit our solitude, and, the better to bring up this precious gift to Heaven, to remove to some more inhabited place. Poor people, to be sure, can not in these cases do all you may think they ought, Sir Knight; but still, gracious God! we must all do as much for our children as we possibly can.

"Well, I went on my way, and this affair would keep running in my head. This tongue of land was most dear to me, and I shrank from the thought of leaving it, when, amid the bustle and brawls of the city, I was obliged to reflect in this manner by myself: 'In a scene of tumult like this, or at least in one not much more quiet, I too must soon take up my abode.' But in spite of these feelings I was far from murmuring against the kind providence of God; on the contrary, when I received this new blessing, my heart breathed a prayer of thankfulness too deep for words to express. I should also speak an untruth were I to say that anything befell me, either on my passage through the forest to the city, or on my returning homeward, that gave me more alarm than usual, as at that time I never had seen any appearance there which could terrify or annoy me. The Lord was ever with me in those awful shades."

Thus speaking, he took his cap reverently from his

bald head and continued to sit, for a considerable time, in devout thought. He then covered himself again, and went on with his relation:

“On this side the forest—alas! it was on this side that woe burst upon me—my wife came wildly to meet me, clad in mourning apparel, and her eyes streaming with tears. ‘Gracious God!’ I cried with a groan, ‘where’s our child? Speak!’

“‘With the Being on whom you have called, dear husband,’ she answered; and we now entered the cottage together, weeping in silence. I looked for the little corse, almost fearing to find what I was seeking; and then it was I first learned how all had happened.

“My wife had taken the little one in her arms, and walked out to the shore of the lake. She there sat down by its very brink; and while she was playing with the infant, as free from all fear as she was full of delight, it bent forward on a sudden, as if seeing something very beautiful in the water. My wife saw her laugh, the dear angel, and try to catch the image in her little hands; but in a moment, with a motion swifter than sight, she sprang from her mother’s arms and sank in the lake, the watery glass into which she had been gazing. I searched for our lost darling again and again; but it was all in vain; I could nowhere find the least trace of her.

“We were again childless, and were now, on the same evening, sitting together by our cottage hearth. We had no desire to talk, even if our tears would have permitted us. As we thus sat in mournful stillness, gazing into the fire, all at once we heard something without—a slight rustling at the door. The door flew open, and we saw a little girl, three or four years old, and more beautiful than I am able to tell you, standing on the threshold, richly dressed and smiling upon us. We were struck dumb

with astonishment, and I knew not, for a time, whether the tiny form was a real human being, or a mere mockery of enchantment. But I soon perceived water dripping from her golden hair and rich garments, and that the pretty child had been lying in the water and stood in immediate need of our help.

“‘Wife,’ said I, ‘no one has been able to save our child for us; still we doubtless ought to do for others what would make ourselves the happiest parents on earth could any one do us the same kindness.’

“We undressed the little thing, put her to bed, and gave her something warming to drink. At all this she spoke not a word, but only turned her eyes upon us—eyes blue and bright as sea or sky—and continued looking at us with a smile.

“Next morning we had no reason to fear that she had received any other harm than her wetting, and I now asked her about her parents, and how she could have come to us. But the account she gave was both confused and incredible. She must surely have been born far from here, not only because I have been unable, for these fifteen years, to learn anything of her birth, but because she then said, and at times continues to say, many things so very singular that neither of us knows, after all, whether she may not have dropped from the moon. Then her talk runs upon golden castles, crystal domes, and Heaven knows what extravagances besides. What of her story, however, she related with most distinctness was this: that while she was once taking a sail with her mother on the great lake she fell out of the boat into the water, and that when she first recovered her senses she was here under our trees, where the gay scenes of the shore filled her with delight.

“We now had another care weighing upon our minds,

and one that caused us no small perplexity and uneasiness. We, of course, very soon determined to keep and bring up the child we had found, in place of our own darling that had been drowned; but who could tell us whether she had been baptized or not? She herself could give us no light on the subject. When we asked her the question, she commonly made answer that she well knew she was created for God's praise and glory, and that as to what might promote the praise and glory of God she was willing to let us determine.

"My wife and I reasoned in this way: 'If she has not been baptized, there can be no use in putting off the ceremony; and if she has been, it is more dangerous to have too little of a good thing than too much.'

"Taking this view of our difficulty, we now endeavoured to hit upon a good name for the child, since while she remained without one we were often at a loss, in our familiar talk, to know what to call her. We at length decided that Dorothea would be most suitable for her, as I had somewhere heard it said that this name signified a gift of God; and surely she had been sent to us by Providence as a gift, to comfort us in our misery. She, on the contrary, would not so much as hear Dorothea mentioned: she insisted that, as she had been named Undine by her parents, Undine she ought still to be called.

"It now occurred to me that this was a heathenish name, to be found in no calendar, and I resolved to ask the advice of a priest in the city. He too would hear nothing of the name Undine; and yielding to my urgent request, he came with me through the enchanted forest, in order to perform the rite of baptism here in my cottage.

“The little maid stood before us so smart in her finery, and with so winning an air of gracefulness, that the heart of the priest softened at once in her presence; and she had a way of coaxing him so adroitly, and even of braving him at times with a queerness so merry, that he at last remembered nothing of his many objections to the name Undine.

“Thus, then, was she baptized Undine; and during the holy ceremony she behaved with great propriety and gentleness, wild and wayward as at other times she invariably was. For in this my wife was quite right when she mentioned what care and anxiety the child has occasioned us. If I should relate to you——”

At this moment the knight interrupted the fisherman, with a view to direct his attention to a deep sound, as of a rushing flood, which had caught his ear within a few minutes between the words of the old man. And now the waters came pouring on with redoubled fury before the cottage windows. Both sprang to the door. There they saw, by the light of the risen moon, the brook which issued from the wood, rushing wildly over its banks, and whirling onward with it both stones and branches of trees in its rapid course. The storm, as if awakened by the uproar, burst forth from the clouds, whose immense masses of vapour coursed over the moon with the swiftness of thought; the lake roared beneath the wind that swept the foam from its waves; while the trees of this narrow peninsula groaned from root to topmost branch, as they bowed and swung above the torrent.

“Undine! in God’s name, Undine!” cried the two men in an agony. No answer was returned; and now, regardless of everything else, they hurried from the cottage, one in this direction, the other in that, searching and calling.

III

THE longer Huldbrand sought Undine beneath the shades of night, and failed to find her, the more anxious and confused he became. The impression that she was a mere phantom of the forest gained a new ascendancy over him; indeed, amid the howling of the waves and the tempest, the crashing of the trees, and a change of the scene so entire that it bore no resemblance to its former calm beauty, he was tempted to view the whole peninsula, together with the cottage and its inhabitants, as little more than some mockery of his senses; but still he heard, afar off, the fisherman's anxious and incessant shouting, "Undine! Undine!" and also his aged wife, who, with a loud voice and a strong feeling of awe, was praying and chanting hymns amid the commotion.

At length, when he drew near to the brook which had overflowed its banks, he perceived, by the moonlight, that it had taken its wild course directly in front of the haunted forest, so as to change the peninsula into an island.

"Merciful God!" he breathed to himself, "if Undine has ventured one step within that fearful wood, what will become of her? Perhaps it was all owing to her sportive and wayward spirit, because I could give her no account of my adventures there. And now the stream is rolling between us, she may be weeping alone on the other side in the midst of spectral horrors!"

A shuddering groan escaped him, and clambering over some stones and trunks of overthrown pines, in order to step into the impetuous current, he resolved, either by wading or swimming, to seek the wanderer on the farther shore. He felt, it is true, all the dread and shrinking awe creeping over him, which he had already suffered by daylight among the now tossing and roaring branches

of the forest. More than all, a tall man in white, whom he knew but too well, met his view, as he stood grinning and nodding on the grass beyond the water; but even monstrous forms, like this, only impelled him to cross over toward them, when the thought rushed upon him that Undine might be there alone and in the agony of death.

He had grasped a stout branch of a pine, and stood supporting himself upon it in the whirling current, against which he could with difficulty keep himself erect; but he advanced farther, with a courageous spirit. That instant a gentle voice of warning cried near him: "Do not venture, do not venture!—that old man, the stream, is too full of tricks to be trusted!" He knew the soft tones of the voice; and while he stood as it were entranced, beneath the shadows that now duskily veiled the moon, his head swam with the swell and rolling of the waves, as he every moment saw them foaming and dashing above his knee. Still he disdained the thought of giving up his purpose.

"If you are not really there, if you are merely gambling round me like a mist, may I too bid farewell to life, and become a shadow like you, dear, dear Undine!"¹ Thus calling aloud, he again moved deeper into the stream.

"Look round you—ah, pray look round you, beautiful young stranger! why rush on death so madly!" cried the voice a second time close by him; and looking on one side, as the moon by glimpses unveiled its light, he perceived a little island formed by the flood, and, reclined

¹ This intensive form of expression is almost as familiar in English as in German, and I have not scrupled occasionally to employ it. These lines from the "Ancient Mariner" afford an example:

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea."—TRANSLATOR.

upon its flowery turf beneath the high branches of embowering trees, he saw the smiling and lovely Undine.

With what a thrill of delight, compared with the suspense and pause of a moment before, the young man now plied his sturdy staff! A few steps freed him from the flood that was rushing between himself and the maiden, and he stood near her on the little spot of greensward, in secret security, covered by the primeval trees that rustled above them. Undine had partially risen within her tent of verdure, and she now threw her arms round his neck, so that she gently drew him down upon the soft seat by her side.

"Here you shall tell me your story, my handsome friend," she breathed in a low whisper; "here the cross old people can not disturb us. And, besides, our roof of leaves here will make quite as good a shelter, it may be, as their poor cottage."

"It is heaven itself," cried Huldbrand; and folding her in his arms, he kissed the lovely and affectionate girl with fervour.

The old fisherman, meantime, had come to the margin of the stream, and he shouted across to the young lovers: "Why, how is this, Sir Knight? I received you with the welcome which one true-hearted man gives to another; and now you sit there caressing my foster-child in secret, while you suffer me in my anxiety to go roaming through the night in quest of her."

"Not till this moment did I find her myself, old father," cried the knight across the water.

"So much the better," said the fisherman; "but now make haste, and bring her over to me upon firm ground."

To this, however, Undine would by no means consent. She declared that she would rather enter the wild forest itself with the beautiful stranger than return to the cot-

tage, where she was so thwarted in her wishes, and from which the handsome knight would soon or late go away. Then closely embracing Huldbrand, she sang the following verse with the warbling sweetness of a bird:

“A Rill would leave its misty vale,
And fortunes wild explore;
Weary at length it reached the main,
And sought its vale no more.”

The old fisherman wept bitterly at her song, but his emotion seemed to awaken little or no sympathy in her. She kissed and caressed her new friend, whom she called her darling, and who at last said to her: “Undine, if the distress of the old man does not touch your heart, it can not but move mine. We ought to return to him.”

She opened her large blue eyes upon him in amazement, and spoke at last with a slow and lingering accent: “If you think so—it is well; all that you think right is right to me. But the old man over there must first give me his promise that he will allow you, without objection, to relate what you saw in the wood, and—well, other things will settle themselves.”

“Come, do only come!” cried the fisherman to her, unable to utter another word. At the same time he stretched his arms wide over the current toward her, and, to give her assurance that he would do what she required, nodded his head; this motion caused his white hair to fall strangely over his face, and Huldbrand could not but remember the nodding white man of the forest. Without allowing anything, however, to produce in him the least confusion, the young knight took the beautiful girl in his arms and bore her across the narrow channel which the stream had torn away between her little island and the solid shore. The old man fell upon Undine’s neck, and found it impossible either to express his joy or to kiss

her enough; even the ancient dame came up, and embraced the recovered girl most cordially. Every word of censure was carefully avoided; the more so, indeed, as even Undine, forgetting her waywardness, almost overwhelmed her foster-parents with caresses and the prattle of tenderness.

When at length the excess of their joy at recovering their child had subsided, and they seemed to have come to themselves, morning had already dawned, opening to view and brightening the waters of the lake. The tempest had become hushed, and small birds sang merrily on the moist branches.

As Undine now insisted upon hearing the recital of the knight's promised adventures, the aged couple, smiling with good humour, yielded to her wish. Breakfast was brought out beneath the trees, which stood behind the cottage toward the lake on the north, and they sat down to it with delighted hearts—Undine lower than the rest (since she would by no means allow it to be otherwise) at the knight's feet on the grass. These arrangements being made, Huldbrand began his story in the following manner.

IV

"It is about eight days since I rode into the free imperial city that lies yonder on the farther side of the forest. Soon after my arrival a splendid tournament and running at the ring took place there, and I spared neither my horse nor my lance in the encounters.

"Once, while I was pausing at the lists, to rest from the brisk exercise, and was handing back my helmet to one of my attendants, a female figure of extraordinary

beauty caught my attention, as, most magnificently attired, she stood looking on at one of the balconies. I learned, on making inquiry of a person near me, that the name of the gay young lady was Bertalda, and that she was a foster-daughter of one of the powerful dukes of this country. She too, I observed, was gazing at me, and the consequences were such as we young knights are wont to experience: whatever success in riding I might have had before, I was now favoured with still better fortune. That evening I was Bertalda's partner in the dance, and I enjoyed the same distinction during the remainder of the festival."

A sharp pain in his left hand, as it hung carelessly beside him, here interrupted Huldbrand's relation, and drew his eye to the part affected. Undine had fastened her pearly teeth, not without some keenness, upon one of his fingers, appearing at the same time very gloomy and displeased. On a sudden, however, she looked up into his eyes with an expression of tender melancholy, and whispered almost inaudibly, "You blame me, but it was all your own fault."

She then covered her face, and the knight, strangely embarrassed and thoughtful, went on with his story:

"This lady Bertalda, of whom I spoke, is of a proud and wayward spirit. The second day I saw her she pleased me by no means so much as she had the first, and the third day still less. But I continued about her, because she showed me more favour than she showed any other knight; and it so happened that I playfully asked her to give me one of her gloves.

"'When you have entered the haunted forest all alone,' said she, 'when you have explored its wonders, and brought me a full account of them, the glove is yours.'

"As to getting her glove, it was of no importance to me whatever; but the word had been spoken, and no honourable knight would permit himself to be urged to such a proof of valour a second time."

"I thought," said Undine, interrupting him, "that she loved you."

"It did appear so," replied Huldbrand.

"Well!" exclaimed the maiden, laughing, "this is beyond belief; she must be very stupid and heartless. To drive from her one who was dear to her! And, worse than all, into that ill-omened wood! The wood and its mysteries, for all I should have cared, might have waited a long while."

"Yesterday morning, then," pursued the knight, smiling brightly upon Undine, "I set out from the city, my enterprise before me. The early light lay rich upon the verdant turf. It shone so rosy on the slender boles of the trees, and there was so merry a whispering among the leaves, that in my heart I could not but laugh at people who feared meeting anything to terrify them in a spot so delicious. 'I shall soon trot through the forest, and as speedily return,' I said to myself in the overflow of joyous feeling; and ere I was well aware I had entered deep among the green shades, while of the plain that lay behind me I was no more able to catch a glimpse.

"Then the conviction for the first time impressed me that in a forest of so great extent I might very easily become bewildered, and that this perhaps might be the only danger that was likely to threaten those who explored its recesses. So I made a halt, and turned myself in the direction of the sun, which meantime had risen somewhat higher; and while I was looking up to observe it, I saw something black among the boughs of a lofty oak. My first thought was, 'It is a bear!' and I grasped

my weapon of defence; the object then accosted me from above in a human voice, but in a tone most harsh and hideous: 'If I overhead here do not gnaw off these dry branches, Sir Wiseacre, what shall we have to roast you with when midnight comes?' And with that it grinned, and made such a rattling with the branches that my courser became mad with affright, and rushed furiously forward with me, before I had time to see distinctly what sort of devil's beast it was."

"You must not name it," said the old fisherman, crossing himself; his wife did the same without speaking a word; and Undine, while her eye sparkled with glee, looked at her beloved knight and said: "The best of the story is, however, that as yet they have not actually roasted you. But pray make haste, my handsome young friend. I long to hear more."

The knight then went on with his adventures: "My horse was so wild that he well-nigh rushed with me against limbs and trunks of trees. He was dripping with sweat, through terror, heat, and the violent straining of his muscles. Still he refused to slacken his career. At last, altogether beyond my control, he took his course directly up a stony steep; when suddenly a tall white man flashed before me, and threw himself athwart the way my mad steed was taking. At this apparition he shuddered with new affright, and stopped, trembling. I took this chance of recovering my command of him, and now for the first time perceived that my deliverer, so far from being a white man, was only a brook of silver brightness, foaming near me in its descent from the hill, while it crossed and arrested my horse's course with its rush of waters."

"Thanks, thanks, dear Brook!" cried Undine, clapping her little hands. But the old man shook his head, and, deeply musing, looked vacantly down before him.

"Hardly had I well settled myself in my saddle, and got the reins in my grasp again," Huldbrand pursued, "when a wizard-like dwarf of a man was standing at my side, diminutive and ugly beyond conception, his complexion of a brownish yellow, and his nose scarcely of less magnitude than all the rest of him. The fellow's mouth was slit almost from ear to ear, and he showed his teeth with a simpering smile of idiot courtesy, while he overwhelmed me with bows and scrapes innumerable. The farce now becoming excessively irksome, I thanked him in the fewest words I could well use, turned about my still trembling charger, and purposed either to seek another adventure, or, should I meet with none, to pick my way back to the city; for the sun, during my wild chase, had passed the meridian, and was now hastening toward the west. But this villain of a manikin sprang at the same instant, and, with a turn as rapid as lightning, stood before my horse again.

" 'Clear the way there!' I fiercely shouted; 'the beast is wild, and will make nothing of running over you.'

" 'He will, will he?' cried the imp with a snarl, and snorting out a laugh still more frightfully idiotic; 'pay me, first pay what you owe me—I stopped your fine little nag for you; without my help, both you and he would be now sprawling below there in that stony ravine. Hu! from what a horrible plunge I've saved you!'

" 'Pray don't stretch your mouth any wider,' said I, 'but take your drink-money and be off, though every word you say is false. See, it was the kind brook there, you miserable thing, and not you, that saved me.' And at the same time I dropped a piece of gold into his wizard cap, which he had taken from his head while he was begging before me.

"I then trotted off and left him; but, to make bad

worse, he screamed after me, and on a sudden, with inconceivable quickness, he was close by my side. I started my horse into a gallop; he galloped on with me, impossible for him as it appeared; and with this strange movement, half ludicrous and half horrible, forcing at the same time every limb and feature into distortion, he kept raising the gold piece as high as he could stretch his arm, and screaming at every leap: 'Counterfeit! false! false coin! counterfeit!' and such were the croaking sounds that issued from his hollow breast you would have supposed that every time he made them he must have tumbled upon the ground dead. All this while his disgusting red tongue hung lolling far out of his mouth.

"Discomposed at the sight, I stopped and asked him: 'What do you mean by your screaming? Take another piece of gold, take two more—but leave me.'

"He then began to make his hideous salutations of courtesy again, and snarled out as before: 'Not gold, it shall not be gold, my smart young gentleman; I have too much of that trash already, as I will show you in no time.'

"At that moment, and thought itself could not have been more instantaneous, I seemed to have acquired new powers of sight. I could see through the solid green plain as if it were green glass, and the smooth surface of the earth were round as a globe; and within it I saw crowds of goblins, who were pursuing their pastime, and making themselves merry with silver and gold. They were tumbling and rolling about, heads up and heads down: they pelted one another in sport with the precious metals, and with irritating malice blew gold dust in one another's eyes. My odious companion stood half within and half without; he ordered the others to reach him up a vast quantity of gold; this he showed to me with a laugh,

and then flung it again ringing and chinking down the measureless abyss.

"After this contemptuous disregard of gold, he held up the piece I had given him, showing it to his brother gnomes below, and they laughed themselves half dead at a bit so worthless, and hissed me. At last, raising their fingers all smutched with ore, they pointed them at me in scorn, and wilder and wilder, and thicker and thicker, and madder and madder, the crowd were clambering up to the place where I sat gazing at these wonders. Then terror seized me, as before it had seized my horse. I drove my spurs into his sides; and how far he rushed headlong with me through the forest, during this second of my wild heats, it is impossible to say.

"At last, when I had come to a dead halt again, the cool of evening was around me. I caught the gleam of a white foot-path through the branches of the trees; and presuming it would lead me out of the forest toward the city, I was desirous of working my way into it; but a face perfectly white and indistinct, with features forever changing, kept thrusting itself out and peering at me between the leaves. I tried to avoid it; but wherever I went, there too appeared the unearthly face. I was maddened with rage at this interruption, and drove my steed at the appearance full tilt; when such a cloud of white foam came rushing upon me and my horse that we were almost blinded and glad to turn about and escape. Thus from step to step it forced us on, and ever aside from the foot-path, leaving us, for the most part, only one direction open. But when we advanced in this, although it kept following close behind us, it did not occasion the smallest harm or inconvenience.

"At times, when I looked about me at the form, I perceived that the white face, which had splashed upon

us its shower of foam, was resting on a body equally white and of more than gigantic size. Many a time, too, I received the impression that the whole appearance was nothing more than a wandering stream or torrent, but respecting this I could never attain to any certainty. Both of us, horse and rider, became weary, as we shaped our course according to the movements of the white man, who continued nodding his head at us, as if he would say, 'Perfectly right! perfectly right!' And thus, at length, we came out here at the edge of the wood, where I saw the fresh turf, the waters of the lake, and your little cottage, and where the tall white man disappeared."

"Heaven be praised that he is gone!" cried the old fisherman; and he now fell to considering how his guest could most conveniently return to his friends in the city. Upon this, Undine began tittering to herself, but so very low that the sound was hardly perceivable. Huldbrand, observing it, said: "I had hoped you would see me remain here with pleasure; why then do you now appear so happy, when our talk turns upon my going away?"

"Because you can not go away," answered Undine. "Pray make a single attempt; try with a wherry, with your horse, or alone, as you please, to cross that forest stream which has burst its bounds. Or, rather, make no trial at all, for you would be dashed to pieces by the stones and trunks of trees, which you see driven on with such violence. And as to the lake, I am well acquainted with that; even my father dares not venture out with his wherry far enough to help you."

Huldbrand rose, smiling, in order to look about, and observe whether the state of things were such as Undine had represented it to be. The old man accompanied him, and the maiden, in mockery, went gambolling and playing her antics beside them. They found all, in fact, just

as Undine had said, and that the knight, whether willing or not willing, must submit to remain on the island, so lately a peninsula, until the flood should subside.

When the three were returning to the cottage, after their ramble, the knight whispered in the ear of the little girl: "Well, dear Undine, how is it with you? Are you angry on account of my remaining?"

"Ah," she pettishly made answer, "not a word of that. If I had not bitten you, who knows what fine things you would have put into your story about Bertalda?"

V

AT some period of your life, my dear reader, after being much driven to and fro in the world, you may have reached a situation where all was well with you; that love for the calm security of our own fireside, which we all feel as an affection born with us, again rose within you; you imagined that your home would again bloom forth, as from a cherished grave, with all the flowers of childhood, the purest and most impassioned love; and that, in such a spot, it must be delightful to take up your abode, and build your tabernacle for life. Whether you were mistaken in this, and afterward made a severe expiation for your error, it suits not my purpose to inquire, and you would be unwilling yourself, it may be, to be saddened by a recollection so ungrateful. But again awake within you that foretaste of bliss, so inexpressibly sweet, that angelic salutation of peace, and you will be able, perchance, to understand something of the knight Huldbrand's happiness while he remained on the point of land, now surrounded by the lake.

He frequently observed, and no doubt with heartfelt satisfaction, that the forest stream continued every day to swell and roll on with a more impetuous sweep; that, by tearing away the earth, it scooped out a broader and broader channel; and that the time of his seclusion on the island became, in consequence, more and more extended. Part of the day he wandered about with an old cross-bow, which he found in a corner of the cottage, and had repaired, in order to shoot the water-fowl that flew over; and all that he was lucky enough to hit he brought home for a good roast in the kitchen. When he came in with his booty, Undine seldom failed to greet him with a scolding, because he had cruelly deprived her dear merry friends of life, as they were sporting above in the blue ocean of the air; nay more, she often wept bitterly when she viewed the water-fowl dead in his hand. But at other times, when he returned without having shot any, she gave him a scolding equally serious, since, owing to his indolent strolling and awkward handling of the bow, they must now put up with a dinner of pickerel and crawfish. Her playful taunts ever touched his heart with delight; the more so as she afterward strove to make up for her pretended ill humour with the most endearing of caresses.

In this familiarity of the young people their aged friends saw a resemblance to the feelings of their own youth: they appeared to look upon them as betrothed, or even as a young married pair, that lived with them in their age, to afford them assistance on their island, now torn off from the mainland. The loneliness of his situation strongly impressed also young Huldbrand with the feeling that he was already Undine's bridegroom. It seemed to him as if, beyond those encompassing floods, there were no other world in existence, or at any rate as if he could never cross them and again associate with the world of

other men; and when at times his grazing steed raised his head and neighed to him, seemingly inquiring after his knightly achievements and reminding him of them, or when his coat-of-arms sternly shone upon him from the embroidery of his saddle and the caparisons of his horse, or when his sword happened to fall from the nail on which it was hanging in the cottage, and flashed on his eye as it slipped from the scabbard in its fall—he quieted the doubts of his mind by saying to himself: “Undine can not be a fisherman’s daughter; she is, in all probability, a native of some remote region, and a member of some illustrious family.”

There was one thing, indeed, to which he had a strong aversion: this was to hear the old dame reproving Undine. The wild girl, it is true, commonly laughed at the reproof, making no attempt to conceal the extravagance of her mirth; but it appeared to him like touching his own honour; and still he found it impossible to blame the aged wife of the fisherman, since Undine always deserved at least ten times as many reproofs as she received: so he continued to feel in his heart an affectionate tenderness for them all, even for the ancient mistress of the house, and his whole life flowed on in the calm stream of contentment.

But an interruption came at last. The fisherman and the knight had been accustomed at dinner, and also in the evening, when the wind roared without, as it rarely failed to do toward night, to enjoy together a flask of wine. But now their whole stock, which the fisherman had from time to time brought with him from the city, was exhausted, and they were both quite out of humour at the circumstance. That day Undine laughed at them excessively, but they were not disposed to join in her jests with the same gaiety as usual. Toward evening she went out

of the cottage, to escape, as she said, the sight of two such long and tiresome faces.

While it was still twilight, some appearances of a tempest seemed to be again mustering in the sky, and the waves rushed and roared around them: the knight and the fisherman sprang to the door in terror, to bring home the maiden, remembering the anguish of that night when Huldbrand had first entered the cottage. But Undine met them at the same moment, clapping her little hands in high glee.

"What will you give me," she cried, "to provide you with wine?—or rather, you need not give me anything," she continued, "for I am already satisfied, if you look more cheerful, and are in better spirits, than throughout this last most wearisome day. Do only come with me one minute; the forest stream has driven ashore a cask; and I will be condemned to sleep a whole week if it is not a wine-cask."

The men followed her, and actually found, in a bushy cove, a cask, which inspired them with as much joy as if they were sure it contained the generous old wine for which they were thirsting. They first of all, and with as much expedition as possible, rolled it toward the cottage; for heavy clouds were again rising in the west, and they could discern the waves of the lake, in the fading light, lifting their white foaming heads, as if looking out for the rain, which threatened every instant to pour upon them. Undine helped the men, as much as she was able; and as the shower, with a roar of wind, came suddenly sweeping on in rapid pursuit, she raised her finger with a merry menace toward the dark mass of clouds, and cried: "You cloud, you cloud, have a care!—beware how you wet us; we are some way from shelter yet."

The old man reproved her for this sally, as a sinful

presumption; but she laughed to herself with a low tittering, and no mischief came from her wild behaviour. Nay more, what was beyond their expectation, all three reached their comfortable hearth unwet, with their prize secured; but the moment the cask had been broached, and proved to contain wine of a remarkably fine flavour, the rain poured unrestrained from the black cloud; and the tempest raved through the tops of the trees and swept far over the billows of the deep.

Having immediately filled several bottles from the large cask, which promised them a supply for a long time, they drew round the glowing hearth; and comfortably secured from the violence of the storm, they sat tasting the flavour of their wine, and bandying their quips and pleasantries.

As reflection returned upon him, the old fisherman all at once became very grave, and said: "Ah, great God! here we sit, rejoicing over this rich gift, while he to whom it first belonged, and from whom it was wrested by the fury of the stream, must there also, it is more than probable, have lost his life."

"His fate, I trust, was not quite so melancholy as that," said Undine, while, smiling, she filled the knight's cup to the brim.

But he exclaimed: "By my unsullied honour, old father, if I knew where to find and rescue him, no fear of exposure to the night, nor any peril, should deter me from making the attempt. But I give you all the assurance I am able to give that if I ever reach an inhabited country again I will find out the owner of this wine or his heirs, and make double and triple reimbursement."

The old man was gratified with this assurance; he gave the knight a nod of approbation, and now drained his cup with an easier conscience and more relish.

Undine, however, said to Huldbrand: "As to the repayment and your gold, you may do whatever you like. But what you said about your venturing out, and searching, and exposing yourself to danger, appears to me far from wise. I should cry my very eyes out should you perish there on such a wild jaunt; and is it not true that you would prefer staying here with me and the good wine?"

"Most assuredly," answered Huldbrand, smiling.

"Well, then," replied Undine, "you see you spoke unwisely. For charity begins at home; our neighbour ought not to be our first thought; and whatever is a calamity to him would be one in our own case also."

The mistress of the house turned away from her, sighing and shaking her head, while the fisherman forgot his wonted indulgence toward the graceful little girl, and thus reproved her:

"That sounds exactly as if you had been brought up by heathens and Turks"; and he finished his reproof by adding, "May God forgive both me and you—unfeeling child!"

"Well, say what you will, this is what I think and feel," replied Undine, "whoever brought me up—and how can a thousand of your words help it?"

"Silence!" exclaimed the fisherman in a voice of stern rebuke; and she, who with all her wild spirit was at the same time extremely alive to fear, shrank from him, moved close up to Huldbrand, trembling, and said very softly:

"Are you also angry, dear friend?"

The knight pressed her soft hand, and tenderly stroked her locks. He was unable to utter a word, for his vexation, arising from the old man's severity toward Undine, closed his lips; and thus the two couples sat opposite to each other at once heated with anger and in embarrassed silence.

VI

IN the midst of this painful stillness a low knocking was heard at the door, which struck all in the cottage with dismay; for there are times when a slight circumstance, coming unexpectedly upon us, startles us like something supernatural. But here it was a further source of alarm, that the enchanted forest lay so near them, and that their place of abode seemed at present inaccessible to the visit of any human being. While they were looking upon one another in doubt, the knocking was again heard, accompanied with a deep groan. The knight sprang to seize his sword. But the old man said in a low whisper:

"If it be what I fear it is, no weapon of yours can protect us."

Undine in the meanwhile went to the door, and cried with the firm voice of fearless displeasure: "Spirits of the earth! if mischief be your aim, Kühleborn shall teach you better manners."

The terror of the rest was increased by this wild speech; they looked fearfully upon the girl, and Huldbrand was just recovering presence of mind enough to ask what she meant, when a voice reached them from without:

"I am no spirit of the earth, though a spirit still in its earthly body. You that are within the cottage there, if you fear God and would afford me assistance, open your door to me."

By the time these words were spoken, Undine had opened it; and the lamp throwing a strong light upon the stormy night, they perceived an aged priest without, who stepped back in terror when his eye fell on the unexpected sight of a little damsel of such exquisite beauty. Well might he think there must be magic in the wind, and witchcraft at work, where a form of such surpassing loveliness

appeared at the door of so humble a dwelling. So he lifted up his voice in prayer:

“Let all good spirits praise the Lord God!”

“I am no spectre,” said Undine with a smile. “Do you think, indeed, I look so very frightful? And more—you can not but bear me witness yourself that I am far from shrinking terrified at your holy words. I too have knowledge of God, and understand the duty of praising him; every one, to be sure, has his own way of doing this, and this privilege he meant we should enjoy when he gave us being. Walk in, father; you will find none but worthy people here.”

The holy man came in bowing, and cast round a glance of scrutiny, wearing at the same time a very placid and venerable air. But water was dropping from every fold of his dark garments, from his long white beard and the white locks of his hair. The fisherman and the knight took him to another apartment, and furnished him with a change of raiment, while they handed his own clothes into the room they had left, for the women to dry. The aged stranger thanked them in a manner the most humble and courteous, but on the knight’s offering him his splendid cloak to wrap round him, he could not be persuaded to take it, but chose instead an old gray overcoat that belonged to the fisherman.

They then returned to the common apartment. The mistress of the house immediately offered her great chair to the priest, and continued urging it upon him, till she saw him fairly in possession of it.

“You are old and exhausted,” said she, “and are, moreover, a man of God.”

Undine shoved under the stranger’s feet her little cricket, on which at other times she used to sit near to Huldbrand, and showed herself, in thus promoting the

comfort of the worthy old man, in the highest degree gentle and amiable. On her paying him these little attentions, Huldbrand whispered some raillery in her ear, but she replied gravely:

“He is a minister of that Being who created us all, and holy things are not to be treated with lightness.”

The knight and the fisherman now refreshed the priest with food and wine; and when he had somewhat recovered his strength and spirits, he began to relate how the day before he had set out from his cloister, which was situated afar off beyond the great lake, in order to visit the bishop, and acquaint him with the distress into which the cloister and its tributary villages had fallen, owing to the extraordinary floods. After a long and wearisome wandering, on account of the same rise of the waters, he had been compelled this day toward evening to procure the aid of two stout boatmen, and cross over an arm of the lake, which had burst its usual boundary.

“But hardly,” continued he, “had our small ferry-boat touched the waves when that furious tempest burst forth which is still raging over our heads. It seemed as if the billows had been waiting our approach, only to rush upon us with a madness the more wild. The oars were wrested from the grasp of my men in an instant; and, shivered by the resistless force, they drove farther and farther out before us upon the waves. Unable to direct our course, we yielded to the blind power of Nature, and seemed to fly over the surges toward your remote shore, which we saw looming through the mist and foam of the deep. Then it was, at last, that our boat turned short from its course, and rocked with a motion that became more and more wild and dizzy: I know not whether it was overset or the violence of the motion threw me overboard. In my agony and struggle at the thought of a near and terrible death,

the waves bore me onward, till one of them cast me ashore here beneath the trees of your island."

"Yes, an island!" cried the fisherman. "A short time ago it was only a point of land. But now, since the forest stream and lake have become all but mad, it appears to be entirely changed."

"I observed something of it," replied the priest, "as I stole along the shore in the obscurity; and hearing nothing around me but a sort of wild uproar, I perceived at last that the noise came from a point exactly where a beaten foot-path disappeared. I now caught the light in your cottage, and ventured hither, where I can not sufficiently thank my Father in heaven that, after preserving me from the waters, he has also conducted me to such pious people as you are; and the more so as it is difficult to say whether I shall ever behold any other persons in this world except you four."

"What mean you by those words?" asked the fisherman.

"Can you tell me, then, how long this commotion of the elements will last?" returned the holy man. "And the years of my pilgrimage are many. The stream of my life may easily sink into the ground and vanish before the overflowing of that forest stream shall subside. Indeed, taking a general view of things, it is not impossible that more and more of the foaming waters may rush in between you and yonder forest, until you are so far removed from the rest of the world that your small fishing canoe may be incapable of passing over, and the inhabitants of the continent entirely forget you in your old age, amid the dissipation and diversions of life."

At this melancholy foreboding the old lady shrank back with a feeling of alarm, crossed herself, and cried, "May God forbid!"

But the fisherman looked upon her with a smile, and said: "What a strange being is man! Suppose the worst to happen: our state would not be different—at any rate, your own would not, dear wife—from what it is at present. For have you, these many years, been farther from home than the border of the forest? And have you seen a single human being besides Undine and me? It is only a short time since the coming of the knight and the priest. They will remain with us, even if we do become a forgotten island; so, after all, you will derive the best advantage from the disaster."

"I know not," replied the ancient dame; "it is a dismal thought, when brought fairly home to the mind, that we are forever separated from mankind, even though, in fact, we never do know nor see them."

"Then you will remain with us, then you will remain with us!" whispered Undine in a voice scarcely audible and half singing, while with the intense fervour of the heart she nestled more and more-closely to Huldbrand's side. But he was absorbed in the deep and strange musings of his own mind. The region on the other side of the forest river seemed, since the last words of the priest, to have been withdrawing farther and farther, in dim perspective, from his view; and the blooming island on which he lived grew green and smiled more freshly before the eye of his mind. His bride glowed like the fairest rose—not of this obscure nook only, but even of the whole wide world, and the priest was now present.

Besides these hopes and reveries of love, another circumstance influenced him: the mistress of the family was directing an angry glance at the fair girl because, even in the presence of the priest, she was leaning so fondly on her darling knight; and it seemed as if she were on the point of breaking out in harsh reproof. Then was the

resolution of Huldbrand taken; his heart and mouth were opened; and turning toward the priest, he said, "Father, you here see before you an affianced pair, and if this maiden and these worthy people of the island have no objection, you shall unite us this very evening."

The aged couple were exceedingly surprised. They had often, it is true, thought of this, but as yet they never had mentioned it; and now when the knight made the attachment known, it came upon them like something wholly new and unexpected. Undine became suddenly grave, and cast her eyes upon the floor in a deep reverie, while the priest made inquiries respecting the circumstances of their acquaintance, and asked the old people whether they gave their consent to the union. After a great number of questions and answers, the affair was arranged to the satisfaction of all; and the mistress of the house went to prepare the bridal apartment for the young couple, and also, with a view to grace the nuptial solemnity, to seek for two consecrated tapers, which for a long time she had kept by her for this occasion.

The knight in the meanwhile busied himself about his gold chain, for the purpose of disengaging two of its links, that he might make an exchange of rings with his bride. But when she saw his object she started from her trance of musing, and exclaimed:

"Not so! my parents were far from sending me into the world so perfectly destitute; on the contrary, they must have foreseen, even at so early a period, that such a night as this would come."

Thus speaking, she was out of the room in a moment, and a moment later returned with two costly rings, of which she gave one to her bridegroom, and kept the other for herself. The old fisherman was beyond measure astonished at this; and his wife, who was just re-entering the

room, was even more surprised than he that neither of them ever had seen these jewels in the child's possession.

"My parents," said Undine, "made me sew these trinkets to that beautiful raiment which I wore the very day I came to you. They also charged me on no account whatever to mention them to any one before the evening I should be married. At the time of my coming, therefore, I took them off in secret, and have kept them concealed to the present hour."

The priest now cut short all further questioning and wondering, while he lighted the consecrated tapers, placed them on a table, and ordered the bridal pair to stand directly before him. He then pronounced the few solemn words of the ceremony, and made them one; the elder couple gave the younger their blessing; and the bride, slightly trembling and thoughtful, leaned upon the knight.

The priest then spoke plainly and at once: "You are strange people, after all; for why did you tell me you were the only inhabitants of the island? So far is this from being true, I have seen, the whole time I have been performing the ceremony, a tall, stately man, in a white mantle, stand opposite to me, looking in at the window. He must be still waiting before the door, if peradventure you would invite him to come in."

"God forbid!" cried the old lady, shrinking back; the fisherman shook his head without opening his lips, and Huldbrand sprang to the window. It appeared to him that he could still discern some vestige of a form, white and indistinct as a vapour, but it soon wholly disappeared in the gloom. He convinced the priest that he must have been quite mistaken in his impression; and now, inspired with the freedom and familiarity of perfect confidence, they all sat down together round a bright and comfortable hearth.

VII

BEFORE the nuptial ceremony, and during its performance, Undine had shown a modest gentleness and maidenly reserve; but it now seemed as if all the wayward freaks that effervesced within her were foaming and bursting forth with an extravagance only the more bold and unrestrained. She teased her bridegroom, her foster-parents, and even the priest, whom she had just now revered so highly, with all sorts of childish tricks and vagaries; and when the ancient dame was about to reprove her too frolicsome spirit, the knight, by a few serious and expressive words, imposed silence upon her by calling Undine his wife.

The knight was himself, indeed, just as little pleased with Undine's childish behaviour as the rest; but still all his winking, hemming, and expressions of censure were to no purpose. It is true, whenever the bride observed the dissatisfaction of her husband—and this occasionally happened—she became more quiet, placed herself beside him, stroked his face with caressing fondness, whispered something smilingly in his ear, and in this manner smoothed the wrinkles that were gathering on his brow. But the moment after some wild whim would make her resume her antic movements, and all went worse than before.

The priest then spoke in a kind, although serious tone: "My pleasant young friend, surely no one can witness your playful spirit without being diverted; but remember sometimes so to attune your soul that it may produce a harmony ever in accordance with the soul of your wedded bridegroom."

"Soul!" cried Undine, with a laugh nearly allied to one of derision, "what you say has a remarkably pretty sound, and for most people, too, it may be a very instructive

rule and profitable caution. But when a person has no soul at all, how, I pray you, can such attuning be possible? And this in truth is just my condition."

The priest was much hurt, but continued silent in holy displeasure, and in sorrow turned away his face from the maiden. She, however, went up to him with the most winning sweetness, and said:

"Nay, I entreat you, first listen to some particulars before you frown upon me in anger, for your frown of anger is painful to me, and you ought not to give pain to a creature that has done nothing injurious to you. Only have patience with me, and I will explain to you every word of what I meant."

She had come to the resolution, it was evident, to give a full account of herself, when she suddenly faltered, as if seized with an inward shuddering, and burst into a passion of tears. None of them were able to understand the intenseness of her feelings, and with mingled emotions of fear and anxiety they gazed on her in silence. Then wiping away her tears, and looking earnestly at the priest, she at last said:

"There must be something lovely, but at the same time something most awful, about a soul. In the name of God, holy man, were it not better that we never shared a gift so mysterious?"

Again she paused and restrained her tears, as if waiting for an answer. All in the cottage had risen from their seats, and stepped back from her with horror. She, however, seemed to have eyes for no one but the holy man; a fearful curiosity was painted on her features, and this made her emotion appear terrible to the others.

"Heavily must the soul weigh down its possessor," she pursued, when no one returned her any answer, "very heavily! for already its approaching image overshadows

me with anguish and mourning. And, alas! I have till now been so merry and light-hearted!" And she burst into another flood of tears, and covered her face with her veil.

The priest, going up to her with a solemn look, now addressed himself to her, and conjured her in the name of God most holy if any evil or spirit of evil possessed her to remove the light covering from her face. But she sank before him on her knees, and repeated after him every sacred expression he uttered, giving praise to God, and protesting that she wished well to the whole world.

The priest then spoke to the knight: "Sir Bridegroom, I leave you alone with her whom I have united to you in marriage. So far as I can discover, there is nothing of evil in her, but of a truth much that is wonderful. What I recommend to you in domestic life is prudence, love, and fidelity."

Thus speaking, he left the apartment, and the fisherman with his wife followed him, crossing themselves.

Undine had sunk upon her knees; she uncovered her face and exclaimed, while she looked fearfully round upon Huldbrand: "Alas! you will now refuse to look upon me as your own; and still I have done nothing evil, poor unhappy child that I am!"

She spoke these words with a look so infinitely sweet and touching that her bridegroom forgot both the confession that had shocked and the mystery that had perplexed him; and hastening to her, he raised her in his arms. She smiled through her tears, and that smile was like the rosy morning light playing upon a small stream.

"You can not desert me!" she whispered with a confiding assurance, and stroked the knight's cheeks with her little soft hands. He was thus in some degree withdrawn from those terrible apprehensions that still lay lurking in the recesses of his soul, and were persuading him that he

had been married to a fairy, or some spiteful and mischievous being of the spirit-world; but, after all, only this single question, and that almost unawares, escaped from his lips:

"Dearest Undine, pray tell me this one thing: what was it you meant by 'spirits of the earth' and 'Kühleborn' when the priest stood knocking at the door?"

"Mere fictions! mere tales of children!" answered Undine, laughing, now quite restored to her wonted gaiety. "I first awoke your anxiety with them, and you finally awoke mine. This is the end of the story and of our nuptial evening."

"Nay, not exactly that," replied the enamoured knight, extinguishing the tapers, and a thousand times kissing his beautiful and beloved bride, while, lighted by the moon that shone brightly through the windows, he bore her into their bridal apartment.

VIII

THE fresh light of morning awoke the young married pair. Undine bashfully hid her face beneath their covering, and Huldbrand lay lost in silent reflection. Whenever during the night he had fallen asleep, strange and horrible dreams of spectres had disturbed him; and these shapes, grinning at him by stealth, strove to disguise themselves as beautiful females; and from beautiful females they all at once assumed the appearance of dragons. And when he started up, aroused by the intrusion of these hideous forms, the moonlight shone pale and cold before the windows without. He looked affrighted at Undine, in whose arms he had fallen asleep, and she was reposing in unaltered beauty and sweetness beside him. Then pressing her rosy

lips with a light kiss, he again fell into a slumber, only to be awakened by new terrors.

When he had perfectly awoke, and well considered all the circumstances, he reproached himself for any doubt that could lead him into error in regard to his lovely wife. He also earnestly begged her to pardon the injustice he had done her, but she only gave him her fair hand, heaved a sigh from the depth of her heart, and remained silent. Yet a glance of fervent tenderness, an expression of the soul beaming in her eyes, such as he never had witnessed there before, left him in undoubting assurance that Undine was innocent of any evil against him whatever.

He then rose with a serene mind, and, leaving her, went to the common apartment, where the inmates of the house had already met. The three were sitting round the hearth with an air of anxiety about them, as if they feared trusting themselves to raise their voices above a low apprehensive undertone. The priest appeared to be praying in his inmost spirit, with a view to avert some fatal calamity. But when they observed the young husband come forth so cheerful, a brighter hope rose within them and dispelled the cloudy traces that remained upon their brows. Yes, the old fisherman began to be facetious with the knight, but in a manner so perfectly becoming that his aged wife herself could not help smiling with great good humour.

Undine in the meantime had got ready, and now entered the door, when they were all on the point of rushing to meet her, and yet all remained fixed in admiration, so changed and at the same time so familiar was the young woman's appearance. The priest, with paternal affection beaming from his countenance, first went up to her, and as he raised his hand to pronounce a blessing, the beautiful bride, trembling with religious awe, sank on her knees before him. She begged his pardon, in terms both re-

spectful and submissive, for any foolish things she might have uttered the evening before, and entreated him, in a very pathetic tone, to pray for the welfare of her soul. She then rose, kissed her foster-parents, and, after thanking them for all the kindness they had shown her, said: "Oh, I now feel in my inmost heart how great, how infinitely great, is what you have done for me, you dear, dear friends of my childhood!"

At first she was wholly unable to tear herself away from their affectionate caresses; but the moment she saw the good old mother busy in getting breakfast, she went to the hearth, applied herself to cooking the food and putting it on the table, and would not suffer her to take the least share in the work.

She continued in this frame of spirit the whole day; calm, kind, attentive, at the same time a little mistress of a family, and a tender, modest young woman. The three who had been longest acquainted with her expected every instant to see her capricious spirit break out in some whimsical change or sportive vagary. But their fears were unnecessary. Undine continued as mild and gentle as an angel. The priest found it all but impossible to remove his eyes from her, and he often said to the bridegroom:

"The bounty of Heaven, sir, through me its unworthy instrument, intrusted to you last evening an invaluable treasure; regard and cherish it as you ought to do, and it will promote your temporal and eternal welfare."

Toward evening Undine was hanging upon the knight's arm with lowly tenderness, while she drew him gently out before the door, where the setting sun shone richly over the fresh grass and upon the high, slender boles of the trees. Her emotion was visible; the dew of sadness and love swam in her eyes, while a tender and fearful secret

seemed to hover upon her lips; but sighs, and those scarcely perceptible, were all that made known the wish of her heart. She led her husband farther and farther onward without speaking. When he asked her questions, she replied only with looks, in which, it is true, appeared no immediate answer to his inquiries, but yet a whole heaven of love and timid attachment. Thus they reached the margin of the swollen forest stream, and the knight was astonished to see it gliding away with so gentle a murmuring of its waves that no vestige of its former swell and wildness was now discernible.

"By morning it will be wholly drained off," said the beautiful woman, almost weeping, "and you will then be able to travel, without anything to hinder you, whithersoever you will."

"Not without you, dear Undine," replied the knight, laughing; "for pray remember, even were I disposed to leave you, both the Church and the spiritual powers, the emperor and the laws of the realm, would require the fugitive to be seized and restored to you."

"All this depends on you—all depends on you," whispered his little companion, half weeping and half smiling. "But I still feel sure that you will not leave me; I love you too deeply to fear that misery. Now bear me over to that little island which lies before us. There shall the decision be made. I could easily, indeed, glide through that mere rippling of the water without your aid, but it is so grateful to rest in your arms; and should you determine to put me away, I shall have sweetly rested in them once more, . . . for the last time."

Huldrand was so full of strange anxiety and emotion that he knew not what answer to make. He took her in his arms and carried her over, now first realizing the fact

that this was the same little island from which he had borne her back to the old fisherman the first night of his arrival. On the farther side he placed her upon the soft grass, and was throwing himself lovingly near his beautiful burden; but she said to him: "Not here, but there, opposite to me. I shall read my doom in your eyes, even before your lips pronounce it. Now listen very attentively to what I shall relate to you." And she began:

"You must know, my own love, that there are beings in the elements which bear the strongest resemblance to the human race, and which, at the same time, but seldom become visible to you. The wonderful salamanders sparkle and sport amid the flames; deep in the earth the meagre and malicious gnomes pursue their revels; the forest-spirits belong to the air, and wander in the woods; while in the seas, rivers, and streams live the widespread race of water-spirits. These last, beneath resounding domes of crystal, through which the sky appears with sun and stars, inhabit a region of light and beauty; lofty coral trees glow with blue and crimson fruits in their gardens; they walk over the pure sand of the sea, among infinitely variegated shells, and amid whatever of beauty the old world possessed, such as the present is no more worthy to enjoy—creations which the floods covered with their secret veils of silver; and now these noble monuments glimmer below stately and solemn, and bedewed by the water which loves them and calls forth from their crevices exquisite moss-flowers and enwreathing tufts of sedge.

"Now the nation that dwell there are very fair and lovely to behold, for the most part more beautiful than human beings. Many a fisherman has been so fortunate as to catch a view of a delicate maiden of the waters while she was floating and singing upon the deep. He then



spread to remotest shores the fame of her beauty; and to such wonderful women men are wont to give the name of Undines. But what need of saying more? You, my dear husband, now actually behold an Undine before you."

The knight would have persuaded himself that his lovely wife was under the influence of one of her odd whims, and that she was only amusing herself and him with her extravagant inventions. He wished it might be so. But with whatever power of words he said this to himself, he still could not credit the hope for a moment; a strange shivering shot through his soul; unable to utter a word, he gazed upon the sweet speaker with a fixed eye. She shook her head in distress, heaved a sigh from her full heart, and then proceeded:

"In respect to the circumstances of our life, we should be far superior to yourselves, who are another race of the human family—for we also call ourselves human beings, as we resemble them in form and features—had we not one great evil peculiar to ourselves. Both we and the beings I have mentioned as inhabiting the other elements vanish into air at death, and go out of existence, spirit and body, so that no vestige of us remains; and when you hereafter awake to a purer state of being, we shall remain where sand, and sparks, and wind, and waves remain. We, of course, have no souls; the element moves us, and, again, is obedient to our will while we live, though it scatters us like dust when we die; and as we have nothing to trouble us, we are as merry as nightingales, little goldfishes, and other pretty children of Nature.

"But all beings aspire to rise in the scale of existence higher than they are. It was therefore the wish of my father, who is a powerful water-prince in the Mediterranean

Sea, that his only daughter should become possessed of a soul, although she should have to endure many of the sufferings of those who share that gift.

“The race to which I belong have no other means of obtaining a soul than by forming with an individual of your own the most intimate union of love. I am now possessed of a soul, and I, the very soul itself, thank you, dear Huldbrand, with a warmth of heart beyond expression, and never shall I cease to thank you, unless you render my whole future life miserable. For what will become of me if you avoid and reject me? Still, I would not keep you as my own by artifice. And should you decide to cast me off, then do it now, . . . Leave me here, and return to the shore alone. I will plunge into this brook, where my uncle will receive me—my uncle, who here in the forest, far removed from his other friends, passes his strange and solitary existence. But he is powerful, as well as revered and beloved by many great rivers; and as he brought me hither to our friends of the lake, a light-hearted and laughing child, he will also restore me to the home of my parents, a woman, gifted with a soul, full of affection, and heir to suffering.”

She was about to add something more, when Huldbrand, with the most heartfelt tenderness and love, clasped her in his arms, and again bore her back to the shore. There, amid tears and kisses, he first swore never to forsake his affectionate wife, and esteemed himself even more happy than the Grecian sculptor Pygmalion, for whom Venus gave life to his beautiful statue, and thus changed it into a beloved wife. Supported by his arm, and in the sweet confidence of affection, Undine returned to the cottage; and now she first realized with her whole heart how little cause she had for regretting what she had left, the crystal palaces of her mysterious father.

IX

NEXT morning, when Huldbrand awoke from slumber, and perceived that his beautiful wife was not by his side, he began to give way again to his wild imaginations. These represented to him his marriage, and even the charming Undine herself, as only a shadow without substance, a mere illusion of enchantment. But she entered the door at the same moment, kissed him, seated herself on the bed by his side, and said:

"I have been out somewhat early this morning, to see whether my uncle keeps his word. He has already restored the waters of the flood to his own calm channel, and he now flows through the forest, a rivulet as before, in a lonely and dreamlike current. His friends, too, both of the water and of the air, have resumed their usual peaceful tenor; all in this region will again proceed with order and tranquility; and you can travel homeward without fear of the flood whenever you choose."

It seemed to the mind of Huldbrand that he must be wrapped in some reverie or waking dream, so little was he able to understand the nature of his wife's strange relative. Notwithstanding this, he made no remark upon what she had told him, and the infinite charm of her beauty, gentleness, and affection soon lulled every misgiving to rest.

Some time afterward, while he was standing with her before the door, and surveying the verdant point of land with its boundary of bright waters, such a feeling of bliss came over him in this cradle of his love that he exclaimed:

"Shall we then, so early as to-day, begin our journey? Why should we? It is probable that abroad in the world we shall find no days more delightful than those we have spent in this little green isle, so secret and so secure. Let

us remain here, and see the sun go down two or three times more."

"Just as my lord shall command," replied Undine meekly. "Only we must remember that our aged friends will, at all events, see me depart with pain; and should they now, for the first time, discover the true soul in me, and how fervently I can now love and honour them, their feeble eyes would surely become blind with weeping. As yet they consider my present calm and exemplary conduct as of no better promise than my former occasional quietness—merely the calm of the lake—just while the air remains tranquil—and they will soon learn to cherish a little tree or flower, as they have cherished me. Let me not, then, make known to them this newly bestowed, this love-inspired heart, at the very moment they must lose it for this world; and how could I conceal what I have gained if we continued longer together?"

Huldbrand yielded to her representation, and went to the aged couple to confer with them respecting his journey, on which he proposed to set out that very hour. The priest offered himself as a companion of the young married pair; and, after their taking a short farewell, he held the bridle, while the knight lifted his beautiful wife upon his horse; and with rapid step they crossed the dry channel with her toward the forest. Undine wept in silent but intense emotion; the old people, as she moved away, were more clamorous in the expression of their grief. They appeared to feel, at the moment of separation, all that they were losing in their affectionate foster-daughter.

The three travellers reached the thickest shades of the forest without interchanging a word. It must have been a picturesque sight, in that hall of leafy verdure, to see this lovely woman's form sitting on the noble and richly ornamented steed, on her right hand the venerable priest

in the white garb of his order, on her left the blooming young knight, clad in splendid raiment of scarlet, gold, and violet, girt with a sword that flashed in the sun, and attentively walking beside her. Huldbrand had no eyes but for his fair wife; Undine, who had dried her tears of tenderness, had no eyes but for him; and they soon entered into the still and voiceless converse of looks and gestures, from which after some time they were awakened by the low discourse which the priest was holding with a fourth traveller, who had meanwhile joined them unobserved.

He wore a white gown, resembling in form the dress of the priest's order, except that his hood hung very low over his face, and that the whole drapery floated in such wide folds around him as obliged him every moment to gather it up and throw it over his arm, or by some management of this sort to get it out of his way, and still it did not seem in the least to impede his movement. When the young couple became aware of his presence, he was saying:

"And so, venerable sir, many as have been the years I have dwelt here in this forest, I never have received the name of hermit in your sense of the word. For, as I said before, I know nothing of penance, and I think, too, that I have no particular need of it. Do you ask me why I am so attached to the forest? It is because its scenery is so peculiarly picturesque, and affords me so much pastime when, in my floating white garments, I pass through its world of leaves and dusky shadows; and then a sweet sunbeam glances down upon me, at times, before I think of it."

"You are a very singular man," replied the priest, "and I should like to have a more intimate acquaintance with you."

"And who then may you be yourself, to pass from one thing to another?" inquired the stranger.

"I am called Father Heilmann," answered the holy

man, "and I am from the cloister of our Lady of the Salutation, beyond the lake."

"Well, well," replied the stranger, "my name is Kühleborn, and were I a stickler for the nice distinctions of rank, I might with equal propriety require you to give me the title of noble Lord of Kühleborn, or free Lord of Kühleborn; for I am as free as a bird in the forest, and, it may be, a trifle more so. For example, I now have something to tell that young lady there." And before they were aware of his purpose he was on the other side of the priest, close to Undine, and stretching himself high into the air, in order to whisper something in her ear. But she shrank from him in terror, and exclaimed:

"I have nothing more to do with you."

"Ho, ho!" cried the stranger, with a laugh, "you have made a grand marriage indeed, since you no longer know your own relatives! Have you no recollection of your uncle Kühleborn, who so faithfully bore you on his back to this region?"

"However that may be," replied Undine, "I entreat you never to appear in my presence again. I am now afraid of you; and will not my husband fear and forsake me if he sees me associate with such strange company and kindred?"

"You must not forget, my little niece," said Kühleborn, "that I am with you here as a guide; otherwise those madcap spirits of the earth, the gnomes that haunt this forest, would play you some of their mischievous pranks. Let me therefore still accompany you in peace; even the old priest there had a better recollection of me than you appear to have; for he just now assured me that I seemed to be very familiar to him, and that I must have been with him in the ferry-boat out of which he tumbled into the waves. He certainly did see me there, for I was no other

than the water-spout that tore him out of it, and kept him from sinking while I safely wafted him ashore to your wedding."

Undine and the knight turned their eyes upon Father Heilmann; but he appeared to be moving forward, just as if he were dreaming or walking in his sleep, and no longer to be conscious of a word that was spoken. Undine then said to Kühleborn:

"I already see yonder the end of the forest. We have no further need of your assistance, and nothing now gives us alarm but yourself. I therefore beseech you, by our mutual love and good-will, to vanish and allow us to proceed in peace."

Kühleborn seemed to be transported with fury at this: he darted a frightful look at Undine, and grinned fiercely upon her. She shrieked aloud, and called her husband to protect her. The knight sprang round the horse as quick as lightning, and, brandishing his sword, struck at Kühleborn's head. But, instead of severing it from his body, the sword merely flashed through a torrent, which rushed foaming near them from a lofty cliff; and with a splash, which much resembled in sound a burst of laughter, the stream all at once poured upon them, and gave them a thorough wetting. The priest, as if suddenly awaking from a trance, coolly observed:

"This is what I have been some time expecting, because the brook has descended from the steep so close beside us—though at first sight, indeed, it appeared to look just like a man, and to possess the power of speech."

As the waterfall came rushing from its crag, it distinctly uttered these words in Huldbrand's ear: "Rash knight! valiant knight! I am not angry with you; I have no quarrel with you; only continue to defend your charming little wife with the same spirit, you bold knight! you rash blade!"

After advancing a few steps farther, the travellers came out upon open ground. The imperial city lay bright before them; and the evening sun, which touched its towers with gold, kindly dried their garments.

X

THE sudden disappearance of the young knight Huldbrand of Ringstetten had occasioned much remark in the imperial city, and no small concern among those of the people who, as well on account of his expertness in tourney and dance as of his mild and amiable manners, had become greatly attached to him. His attendants were unwilling to quit the place without their master, although not a soul of them had been courageous enough to follow him into the fearful recesses of the forest. They remained, therefore, at their public house, idly hoping, as men are wont to do, and by the expression of their fears keeping the fate of their lost lord fresh in remembrance.

When the violent storms and floods had been observed immediately after his departure, the destruction of the handsome stranger became all but certain. Even Bertalda had quite openly discovered her sorrow, and detested herself for having induced him to take that fatal excursion into the forest. Her foster-parents, the duke and duchess, had meanwhile come to take her away, but Bertalda persuaded them to remain with her until some certain news of Huldbrand should be obtained, whether he were living or dead. She endeavoured also to prevail upon several young knights, who were assiduous in courting her favour, to go in quest of the noble adventurer in the forest. But she refused to pledge her hand as the reward of the enter-

prise, because she still cherished, it might be, a hope of being claimed by the returning knight; and no one would consent, for a glove, a ribbon, or even a kiss, to expose his life to bring back so very dangerous a rival.

When Huldbrand now made his sudden and unexpected appearance, his attendants, the inhabitants of the city, and almost every one rejoiced. We must acknowledge, indeed, that this was not the case with Bertalda; for although it might be quite a welcome event to others that he brought with him a wife of such exquisite loveliness, and Father Heilmann as a witness of their marriage, Bertalda could not but view the affair with grief and vexation. She had, in truth, become attached to the young knight with her whole soul, and then her mourning for his absence, or supposed death, had shown this more than she could now have wished.

But notwithstanding all this, she conducted herself like a prudent woman in circumstances of such delicacy, and lived on the most friendly terms with Undine, whom the whole city looked upon as a princess that Huldbrand had rescued in the forest from some evil enchantment. Whenever any one questioned either her or her husband relative to surmises of this nature, they had wisdom enough to remain silent, or wit enough to evade the inquiries. The lips of Father Heilmann had been sealed in regard to idle gossip of every kind; and, besides, on Huldbrand's arrival, he had immediately returned to his cloister, so that people were obliged to rest contented with their own wild conjectures, and even Bertalda ascertained nothing more of the truth than others. For the rest, Undine daily regarded this fair girl with increasing fondness.

"We must have been heretofore acquainted with each other," she often used to say to her, "or else there must be some mysterious connection between us; for it is in-

credible that any one so perfectly without cause—I mean without some deep and secret cause—should be so fondly attached to another as I have been to you from the first moment of our meeting.”

Even Bertalda could not deny that she felt a confiding impulse, an attraction of tenderness, toward Undine, much as she deemed this fortunate rival the cause of her bitterest disappointment. Under the influence of this mutual regard they found means to persuade, the one her foster-parents, and the other her husband, to defer the day of separation to a period more and more remote; nay more, they had already begun to talk of a plan for Bertalda's some time accompanying Undine to Castle Ringstetten, near one of the sources of the Danube.

Once on a fine evening, while they were promenading the city by starlight, they happened to be talking over their scheme just as they passed the high trees that bordered the public walk. The young married pair, though it was somewhat late, had called upon Bertalda to invite her to share their enjoyment; and all three now proceeded familiarly up and down beneath the dark blue heaven, not seldom interrupted in their converse by the admiration which they could not but bestow upon the magnificent fountain in the middle of the square, and upon the wonderful rush and shooting upward of its water. All was sweet and soothing to their minds; among the shadows of the trees stole in glimmerings of light from the adjacent houses; a low murmur as of children at play, and of other persons who were enjoying their walk, floated round them; they were so alone, and yet sharing so much of social happiness in the bright and stirring world, that whatever had appeared difficult by day now became smooth and easy of its own accord, and the three friends could no longer see

the slightest cause for hesitation in regard to Bertalda's taking the journey.

At that instant, just as they were fixing the day of their departure, a tall man approached them from the middle of the square, bowed respectfully to the company, and spoke something in the young bride's ear. Though displeased with the interruption and its cause, she walked aside a few steps with the stranger, and both began to whisper, as it seemed, in a foreign tongue. Huldrand thought he recognised the strange man of the forest; and he gazed upon him so fixedly that he neither answered nor heard the astonished inquiries of Bertalda. All at once Undine clapped her hands with delight, and turned back from the stranger, laughing: he, frequently shaking his head, retired with a hasty step and discontented air, and descended into the fountain. Huldrand now felt perfectly certain that his conjecture was correct. But Bertalda asked, "And what, my dear Undine, did the master of the fountain wish to say to you?"

The young wife laughed within herself, and made answer: "The day after to-morrow, my dear child, when the anniversary of your name-day¹ returns, you shall be informed."

And this was all she could be prevailed upon to disclose. She merely asked Bertalda to dinner on the appointed day, and requested her to invite her foster-parents; and soon afterward they separated.

"Kühleborn?" said Huldrand to his lovely wife with an inward shudder when they had taken leave of Ber-

¹ Or saint's day. This term refers to a German custom of celebrating not only the birthday, but also the name-day—that is, the day that in the almanac bears the person's Christian name. The old almanacs contained a name for each day in the year, which was either the name of a saint or that of some other remarkable personage in history.

talda, and were now going home through the darkening streets.

"Yes, it was he," answered Undine, "and he would have wearied me with foolish warnings without end. But in the midst of them, quite contrary to his intention, he delighted me with a most welcome piece of news. If you, my dear lord and husband, wish me to acquaint you with it now, you need only command me, and I will freely, and from my heart, tell you all without reserve. But would you confer upon your Undine a very, very great pleasure, only wait till the day after to-morrow, and then you too shall have your share of the surprise."

The knight was quite willing to gratify his wife in regard to what she had asked with so beautiful a spirit; and this spirit she discovered still more, for while she was that night falling asleep she murmured to herself with a smile: "How she will rejoice and be astonished at what her master of the fountain has told me—the dear, happy Bertalda!"

XI

THE company were sitting at dinner; Bertalda, adorned with jewels and flowers without number, the presents of her foster-parents and friends, and looking like some goddess of spring, sat beside Undine and Huldbrand at the head of the table. When the sumptuous repast was ended, and the dessert was placed before them, permission was given that the doors be left open. This was in accordance with the good old custom in Germany, that the common people might see and rejoice in the festivity of their superiors. Among these spectators the servants carried round cake and wine.

Huldbrand and Bertalda waited with secret impatience for the promised explanation, and never, except when they could not well help it, moved their eyes from Undine. But she still continued silent, and merely smiled to herself with secret and heartfelt satisfaction. All who were made acquainted with the promise she had given could perceive that she was every moment on the point of revealing a happy secret; and yet, as children sometimes delay tasting their choicest dainties, she still withheld the communication, with a denial that made it the more desired. Bertalda and Huldbrand shared the same delightful feeling, while in anxious hope they were expecting the unknown disclosure which they were to receive from the lips of their friend.

At this moment several of the company pressed Undine to give them a song. This appeared to her to be quite a well-timed request, and, immediately ordering her lute to be brought, she sang the following words:

“ Morning so bright,
Wild-flowers so gay,
Where high grass so dewy
Crowns the wavy lake’s border.

“ On the meadow’s verdant bosom,
What glimmers there so white?
Have wreaths of snowy blossoms,
Soft-floating, fallen from heaven?

“ Ah, see! a tender infant!
It plays with flowers, unwitting;
It strives to grasp morn’s golden beams.
O where, sweet stranger, where’s your home?
Afar from unknown shores,
The waves have wafted hither
This helpless little one.

“ Nay, clasp not, tender darling,
With tiny hand the flowers;
No hand returns the pressure,
The flowers are strange and mute.

They clothe themselves in beauty,
 They breathe a rich perfume,
 But can not fold around you
 A mother's loving arms—
 Far, far away that mother's fond embrace.

"Life's early dawn just opening faint,
 Your eye still beaming Heaven's own smile,
 So soon your first, best guardians gone—
 Severe, poor child, your fate—
 All, all to you unknown.

"A noble duke has crossed the mead,
 And near you checked his steed's career:
 Wonder and pity touch his heart;
 With knowledge high and manners pure
 He rears you—makes his castle home your own.

"How great, how infinite, your gain!
 Of all the land you bloom the loveliest;
 Yet, ah! that first, best blessing,
 The bliss of parents' fondness,
 You left on strands unknown."

Undine let fall her lute and paused with a melancholy smile; the eyes of Bertalda's noble foster-parents were filled with tears.

"Ah, yes, it was so—such was the morning on which I found you, poor orphan," cried the duke with deep emotion. "The beautiful singer is certainly right; still—

"That first, best blessing,
 The bliss of parents' fondness,'

it was beyond our power to give you."

"But we must hear also what happened to the poor parents," said Undine, as she struck the chords and sang:

"Through her chambers roams the mother,
 Searching, searching everywhere;
 Seeks, and knows not what, with yearning,
 Childless home still finding there.

"Childless home!—O sound of anguish
 She alone the anguish knows,
 There by day who led her dear one,
 There who rocked its night repose.

" Beechen buds again are swelling,
Sunshine warms again the shore,
Ah, fond mother, cease your searching,
Comes the loved and lost no more.

" Then when airs of eve are fresh'ning,
Home the father wends his way;
While with smiles his woe he's veiling,
Gushing tears his heart betray.

" Well he knows, within his dwelling
Still as death he'll find the gloom,
Only hear the mother moaning—
No sweet babe to smile him home."

" Oh, tell me, in the name of Heaven tell me, Undine, where are my parents?" cried the weeping Bertalda. " You certainly know; you must have discovered them, all wonderful as you are, for otherwise you never would have thus torn my heart. Can they be already here? May I believe it possible?" Her eye glanced rapidly over the brilliant company, and rested upon a lady of high rank, who was sitting next to her foster-father.

Then, inclining her head, Undine beckoned toward the door, while her eyes overflowed with the sweetest emotion.

" Where are the poor parents waiting?" she asked; and the old fisherman, diffident and hesitating, advanced with his wife from the crowd of spectators. Swift as the rush of hope within them they threw a look of inquiry, now at Undine, and now at the beautiful lady, who was said to be their daughter.

" It is she! it is she there before you!" exclaimed the restorer of their child, her voice half choked with rapture; and both the aged parents embraced their recovered daughter, weeping aloud and praising God.

But, shocked and indignant, Bertalda tore herself from their arms. Such a discovery was too much for her proud

spirit to bear—especially at the moment when she had doubtless expected to see her former splendour increased, and when hope was picturing to her nothing less brilliant than a royal canopy and a crown. It seemed to her as if her rival had contrived all this, and with the special view to humble her before Huldbrand and the whole world. She reproached Undine; she reviled the old people; and even such offensive words as “deceiver, bribed and perjured impostors,” burst from her lips.

The aged wife of the fisherman then said to herself, but in a very low voice: “Ah, my God! what a wicked vixen of a woman she has grown! and yet I feel in my heart that she is my child.”

The old fisherman, however, had meanwhile folded his hands, and offered up a silent prayer that she might not be his daughter.

Undine, faint and pale as death, turned from the parents to Bertalda, from Bertalda to the parents; she was suddenly cast down from all that heaven of happiness of which she had been dreaming, and plunged into an agony of terror and disappointment which she had never known even in dreams.

“Have you a soul? Can you really have a soul, Bertalda?” she cried again and again to her angry friend, as if with vehement effort she would rouse her from a sudden delirium or some distracting dream, and restore her to recollection.

But when Bertalda became every moment only more and more enraged, as the disappointed parents began to weep aloud, and the company, with much warmth of dispute, were espousing opposite sides, she begged with such earnestness and dignity for the liberty of speaking in this her husband’s dining-hall that all around her were in an

instant hushed to silence. She then advanced to the upper end of the table, where, both humbled and haughty, Bertalda had seated herself, and, while every eye was fastened upon her, said:

“My friends, you appear dissatisfied and disturbed; and you are interrupting with your strife a festivity that I had hoped would bring joy both to you and to myself. Ah, my God! I knew nothing of these your heartless maxims, these your unnatural ways of thinking, and never so long as I live, I fear, shall I become reconciled to them. The disclosure I have made, it seems, is unwelcome to you; but I am not to blame for such a result. Believe me, little as you may imagine this to be the case, it is wholly owing to yourselves. One word more, therefore, is all I have to add, but this is one that must be spoken: I have uttered nothing but truth. Of the certainty of the fact I give you the strongest assurance; no other proof can I or will I produce; but this I will affirm in the presence of God. The person who gave me this information was the very same who decoyed the infant Bertalda into the water, and who, after thus taking her from her parents, placed her on the green grass of the meadow, where he knew the duke was to pass.”

“She is an enchantress,” cried Bertalda, “a witch, that has intercourse with evil spirits. This she acknowledges herself.”

“Never! I deny it,” replied Undine, while a whole heaven of innocence and truth beamed from her eyes. “I am no witch; look upon me, and say if I am.”

“Then she utters both falsehood and folly,” cried Bertalda, “and she is unable to prove that I am the child of these low people. My noble parents, I entreat you to take me from this company, and out of this city, where they do nothing but expose me to shame.”

But the aged duke, a man of honourable feeling, remained unmoved, and his lady remarked: "We must thoroughly examine into this matter. God forbid that we should move a step from this hall before we do so!"

Encouraged by this kind word, the aged wife of the fisherman drew near, made a low obeisance to the duchess, and said: "Exalted and pious lady, you have opened my heart. Permit me to tell you that if this evil-disposed maiden is my daughter she has a mark like a violet between her shoulders, and another of the same kind on the instep of her left foot. If she will only consent to go out of the hall with me——"

"I will not consent to uncover myself before the peasant woman!" interrupted Bertalda, haughtily turning her back upon her.

"But before me you certainly will," replied the duchess gravely. "You will follow me into that room, young woman, and the worthy old lady shall go with us."

The three disappeared, and the rest continued where they were, in the hush of breathless expectation. In a few minutes the women returned, Bertalda pale as death, and the duchess said: "Justice must be done; I therefore declare that our lady hostess has spoken the exact truth. Bertalda is the fisherman's daughter; no further proof is required; and this is all of which on the present occasion you need to be informed."

The princely pair went out with their adopted daughter; the fisherman, at a sign from the duke, followed them with his wife. The other guests retired in silence, or but half suppressing their murmurs, while Undine, weeping as if her heart would break, sank into the arms of Huldbrand.

XII

THE Lord of Ringstetten would certainly have been more gratified had the events of this day been different; but even such as they now were, he could by no means look upon them as unwelcome, since his fair wife had discovered so much natural feeling, kindness of spirit, and cordial affection.

“If I have given her a soul,” he could not help saying to himself, “I have assuredly given her a better one than my own.”

And now what chiefly occupied his mind was to soothe and comfort his weeping wife, and even so early as the morrow to remove her from a place which, after this unpleasant accident, could not fail to be distasteful to her. Yet it is certain that the opinion of the public concerning her was not changed. As something extraordinary had long before been expected of her, the mysterious discovery of Bertalda’s parentage had occasioned little or no surprise; and every one who became acquainted with Bertalda’s story, and with the violence of her behaviour on that occasion, was only disgusted and set against her. Of this state of things, however, the knight and his lady were as yet ignorant; besides, whether the public condemned Bertalda or herself, the one view of the affair would have been as distressing to Undine as the other; and thus they came to the conclusion that the wisest course they could take was to leave behind them the walls of the old city with all the speed in their power.

With the earliest beams of morning a brilliant carriage for Undine drove up to the door of the inn; the horses of Huldbrand and his attendants stood near, stamping the pavement, impatient to proceed. The knight was lead-

ing his beautiful wife from the door when a fisher-girl came up and met them in the way.

"We have no occasion for your fish," said Huldbrand, accosting her; "we are this moment setting out on a journey."

Upon this the fisher-girl began to weep bitterly, and then it was that the young couple first knew her to be Bertalda. They immediately returned with her to their apartment, where she informed them that, owing to her unfeeling and violent conduct of the preceding day, the duke and duchess had been so displeased with her as entirely to withdraw from her their protection, though not before giving her a generous portion. The fisherman, too, had received a handsome gift, and had, the evening before, set out with his wife for their peninsula.

"I would have gone with them," she pursued, "but the old fisherman, who is said to be my father——"

"He certainly is your father, Bertalda," said Undine, interrupting her. "Pray consider what I tell you: the stranger whom you took for the master of the water-works gave me all the particulars. He wished to dissuade me from taking you with me to Castle Ringstetten, and therefore disclosed to me the whole mystery."

"Well, then," continued Bertalda, "my father—if it must needs be so—my father said: 'I will not take you with me until you are changed. If you will leave your home here in the city, and venture to come to us alone through the ill-omened forest, that shall be a proof of your having some regard for us. But come not to me as a lady; come merely as a fisher-girl.' I will do, therefore, just what he commanded me; for since I am abandoned by all the world, I will live and die in solitude, a poor fisher-girl with parents equally poor. The forest, indeed, appears very terrible to me. Horrible spectres make it their haunt, and

I am so timorous. But how can I help it? I have only come here at this early hour to beg the noble lady of Ringstetten to pardon my unbecoming behaviour of yesterday. Dear madam, I have the fullest persuasion that you meant to do me a kindness, but you were not aware how severely you would wound and injure me; and this was the reason that, in my agony and surprise, so many rash and frantic expressions burst from my lips. Forgive me, ah, forgive me! I am in truth so unhappy already. Do but consider what I was only yesterday morning, what I was even at the beginning of your yesterday's festival, and what I am at the present moment!"

Her words now became inarticulate, lost in a passionate flow of tears, while Undine, bitterly weeping with her, fell upon her neck. So powerful was her emotion that it was a long time before she could utter a word. But at length she said:

"You shall still go with us to Ringstetten; all shall remain just as we lately arranged it; only, in speaking to me, pray continue to use the familiar and affectionate terms that we have been wont to use, and do not pain me with the sound of 'madam' and 'noble lady' any more. Consider, we were changed for each other when we were children; even then we were united by a like fate, and we will strengthen this union with such close affection as no human power shall dissolve. Only first of all you must go with us to Ringstetten. In what manner we shall share our sisterly enjoyments there we will leave to be talked over after we arrive."

Bertalda looked up to Huldbrand with timid inquiry. He pitied the fair girl in her affliction, took her hand, and begged her tenderly to intrust herself to him and his wife.

"We will send a message to your parents," continued he, "giving them the reason why you have not come."

And he would have added much more about his worthy friends of the peninsula, when, perceiving that Bertalda shrank in distress at the mention of them, he refrained. Then taking her under the arm as they left the room, he lifted her first into the carriage, after her Undine, and was soon riding blithely beside them; so persevering was he, too, in urging forward their driver that in a short time they had left behind them the limits of the city, and with these a crowd of painful recollections; and now the ladies experienced a satisfaction more and more exquisite as their carriage rolled on through the picturesque scenes which their progress was continually presenting.

After a journey of some days they arrived, on a fine evening, at Castle Ringstetten. The young knight being much engaged with the overseers and menials of his establishment, Undine and Bertalda were left alone. Eager for novelty, they took a walk upon the high rampart of the fortress, and were charmed with the delightful landscape which fertile Swabia spread around them. While they were viewing the scene, a tall man drew near, who greeted them with respectful civility, and who seemed to Bertalda much to resemble the director of the city fountain. Still less was the resemblance to be mistaken when Undine, indignant at his intrusion, waved him off with an air of menace; while he, shaking his head, retreated with rapid strides, as he had formerly done, then glided among the trees of a neighbouring grove and disappeared.

"Do not be terrified, dear Bertalda," said Undine; "the hateful master of the fountain shall do you no harm this time."

And then she related to her the particulars of her history, and who she was herself—how Bertalda had been taken away from the people of the peninsula, and Undine left in her place. This relation at first filled the young

maiden with amazement and alarm; she imagined her friend must be seized with a sudden madness. But, from the consistency of her story, she became more and more convinced that all was true, it so well agreed with former occurrences, and still more convinced from that inward feeling with which truth never fails to make itself known to us. She could not but view it as an extraordinary circumstance that she was herself now living, as it were, in the midst of one of those wild fictions of romance which she had formerly heard related for mere amusement. She gazed upon Undine with awe, but could not avoid feeling a shudder, which seemed to separate her from her friend; and she could not but wonder when the knight, at their evening repast, showed himself so kind and full of love toward a being who appeared, after the discoveries just made, more like a phantom of the spirit-world than one of the human race.

XIII

THE writer of this history, because it moves his own heart, and he wishes it may equally move the hearts of others, begs you, dear reader, to grant him a single favour. Excuse him if he now passes over a considerable period of time, and gives you only a general account of its events. He is well aware that, perfectly conforming to the rules of art and step by step, he might delineate the process by which Huldbrand's warmth of attachment for Undine began to decline, and to be transferred to Bertalda; how Bertalda gradually became more and more attached, and met the young man's glance with the glow of love; how they both seemed rather to fear the poor wife, as a being of another species, than to sympathize with her; how Un-

dine wept, and her tears produced remorse in the knight's heart, yet without awakening his former tenderness, so that his treatment of her would discover occasional impulses of kindness, but a cold shuddering would soon drive him from her side, and he would hasten to the society of Bertalda as a more congenial being of his own race—all this, the writer is aware, he could describe with minute touches of truth, and perhaps this is the course that he ought to pursue. But his heart would feel the task to be too melancholy; for, having suffered calamities of this nature, he is impressed with terror even at the remembrance of their shadows.

You probably have experienced a similar feeling yourself, my dear reader, for such is the inevitable allotment of mortal man. Happy are you if you have rather endured than inflicted this misery, since, in matters of this kind, more blessed is he that receives than he that gives. For when you have been the suffering party, and such remembrances come over the mind, only a soft pensiveness steals into the soul, and perhaps a tender tear trickles down your cheek, while you regret the fading of the flowers in which you once took a delight so exquisite. But of this no more; we would not linger over the evil, and pierce our hearts with pangs a thousandfold repeated, but just briefly hint the course of events, as I said before.

Poor Undine was extremely distressed, and the other two were far from being happy; Bertalda in particular, whenever she was in the slightest degree opposed in her wishes, attributed the cause to the jealousy and oppression of the injured wife. In consequence of this suspicious temper, she was daily in the habit of discovering a haughty and imperious demeanour, to which Undine submitted in sad and painful self-denial; and, such was the blind delu-

sion of Huldbrand, he usually supported the impropriety in the most decisive terms.

What disturbed the inmates of the castle still more was the endless variety of wonderful apparitions which assailed Huldbrand and Bertalda in the vaulted passages of the building, and of which nothing had ever been heard before within the memory of man. The tall white man, in whom Huldbrand but too well recognised Undine's uncle Kühleborn, and Bertalda the spectral master of the water-works, often passed before them with threatening aspect and gestures; more especially, however, before Bertalda, so that she had several times fainted or fallen ill through terror, and in consequence had frequently thought of quitting the castle. But partly owing to her excessive fondness for Huldbrand, as well as to a reliance on what she termed her innocence, because no declaration of mutual attachment ever had been distinctly made, and partly also because she knew not whither to direct her steps, she lingered where she was.

The old fisherman, on receiving the message from the Lord of Ringstetten that Bertalda was his guest, returned answer in some lines almost too illegible to be deciphered, but still the best his advanced life and long disuse of writing permitted him to form.

"I have now become," he wrote, "a poor old widower, for my beloved and faithful wife is dead. But lonely as I now sit in my cottage, I prefer Bertalda's remaining where she is to her living with me. Only let her do nothing to hurt my dear Undine—otherwise she will have my curse."

The last words of this letter Bertalda flung to the winds; but the permission to remain from home, which her father had granted her, she remembered and clung to, just as all of us are wont to do in like circumstances.

One day, a few moments after Huldbrand had ridden

out, Undine called together the domestics of the family, and ordered them to bring a large stone, and carefully to cover with it a magnificent fountain that was in the middle of the castle court. The servants ventured to hint as an objection that it would oblige them to bring their water from the valley below, which was at an inconvenient distance. Undine smiled with an expression of melancholy.

"I am sorry, dear children," replied she, "to increase your labour; I would rather bring up the water-vessels myself; but this fountain must indeed be closed. Believe me when I say that it must be done, and that only by doing it can we avoid a greater evil."

The domestics were all rejoiced to gratify their gentle mistress; and making no further inquiry, they seized the enormous stone. While they were raising it in their hands, and were on the point of adjusting it over the fountain, Bertalda came running to the place, and cried with an air of command that they must stop; that the water she used, so improving to her complexion, she was wont to have brought from this fountain, and that she would by no means allow it to be closed.

This time, however, while Undine showed her usual gentleness, she showed more than her usual resolution, and remained firm to her purpose. She said it belonged to her, as mistress of the castle, to direct the regulations of the household according to her own best judgment, and that she was accountable in this to no one but her lord and husband.

"See, oh, pray see!" exclaimed the dissatisfied and indignant Bertalda, "how the beautiful water is curling and curving, winding and waving there, as if disturbed at being shut out from the bright sunshine, and from the cheerful view of the human countenance, for whose mirror it was created."

In truth, the water of the fountain was agitated, and foaming, and hissing in a surprising manner; it seemed as if there were something within, possessing life and will, that was struggling to free itself from confinement. But Undine only the more earnestly urged on the accomplishment of her commands. This earnestness was scarcely required. The servants of the castle were as happy in obeying their sweet-tempered lady as in opposing the haughty spirit of Bertalda; and with whatever rudeness the latter might scold and threaten, still in a few minutes the stone was lying firm over the opening of the fountain. Undine leaned thoughtfully over it, and wrote with her beautiful fingers on the flat surface. She must, however, have had something very corrosive in her hand; for when she retired, and the domestics went up to examine the stone, they discovered various strange characters upon it, which none of them had seen there before.

When the knight returned home toward evening, Bertalda received him with tears and complaints of Undine's conduct. He threw a severe look at his poor wife, and she cast down her eyes in distress. Still she spoke with great firmness: "My lord and husband, you never reprove even a bond-slave before you hear his defence—how much less, then, your wedded wife!"

"Speak, what moved you to this singular conduct?" said the knight, with a gloomy countenance.

"I could wish to tell you when we are entirely alone," said Undine, with a sigh.

"You can tell me equally well in the presence of Bertalda," he replied.

"Yes, if you command me," said Undine; "but do not command me. Pray, pray, do not!"

She looked so humble, affectionate, and obedient that the heart of the knight was touched and softened, as if

he felt the influence of a ray from better times. He kindly took her arm within his and led her to his apartment, where she said:

“You already know something, my beloved lord, of Kühleborn, my evil-disposed uncle, and have often felt displeasure at meeting him in the passages of this castle. Several times has he terrified Bertalda even to swooning. He does this because he possesses no soul, being a mere elementary mirror of the outward world, while of the world within he can give no reflection. Then, too, he sometimes observes that you are displeased with me, that in my childish weakness I weep at this, and that Bertalda, it may be, is laughing at the same moment. Hence it is that he conceives every sort of wrong and unkindness to exist, and in various ways mixes with our circle unbidden. What do I gain by reproving him? by showing displeasure, and sending him away? He does not believe a word I say. His poor imperfect nature affords him no conception that the pains and pleasures of love have so mysterious a resemblance, and are so intimately connected, that no power on earth is able to separate them. Even in the midst of tears a smile is dawning on the cheek, and smiles call forth tears from their secret recesses.”

She looked up at Huldbrand, smiling and weeping; and he again felt within his heart all the magic of his former love. She perceived it, and pressed him more tenderly to her, while with tears of joy she continued:

“When the disturber of our peace would not be dismissed with words, I was obliged to shut the door upon him; and the only entrance by which he has access to us is that fountain. His connection with the other water-spirits here in this region is cut off by the valleys that border upon us, and his kingdom begins farther off on the Danube, in whose tributary streams some of his good

friends have their abode. For this reason I caused the stone to be placed over the opening of the fountain, and inscribed characters upon it which baffle all the efforts of my suspicious and passionate uncle, so that he now has no power of intruding either upon you, or me, or Bertalda. Human beings, it is true, notwithstanding the characters I have inscribed there, are able to raise the stone without any extraordinary trouble; there is nothing to prevent them. If you choose, therefore, remove it according to Bertalda's desire, but she assuredly knows not what she asks. The rude Kühleborn looks with peculiar ill will upon her; and should much come to pass that he has imperfectly predicted to me, and which may well happen without your meaning any evil—I fear, I fear, my dear husband, that you yourself would be exposed to peril.”

Huldbbrand felt the generosity of his amiable wife in the depth of his heart, since she had been so active in confining her formidable defender, and even at the very moment she was reproached for it by Bertalda. Influenced by this feeling, he pressed her in his arms with the tenderest affection, and said with emotion: “The stone shall remain unmoved; all remains, and ever shall remain, just as you choose to have it, my dear, very dear Undine!”

At these long withheld expressions of tenderness, she returned his caresses with lowly delight, and at length she said: “My dearest husband, since you are so very kind and indulgent to-day, may I venture to ask a favour of you? Pray observe, it is with you as with summer. Even amid its highest splendour, summer puts on the flaming and thundering crown of glorious tempests, in which it strongly resembles a king and god on earth. You, too, are sometimes terrible in your rebukes; your eyes flash lightning, while thunder resounds in your voice; and although this may be quite becoming to you, I in my folly

can not but sometimes weep at it. But never, I entreat you, behave thus toward me on a river, or even when we are near a piece of water. For if you should, pray consider what the consequences will be: my relatives would acquire a right to exercise authority over me. They would tear me from you in their fury with inexorable force, because they would conceive that one of their race was injured; and I should be compelled, as long as I lived, to dwell below in the crystal palaces, and never dare ascend to you again; or should they send me up to you—O God! that would be infinitely more deplorable. No, no, my beloved husband, let it not come to that if your poor Undine is dear to you.”

He solemnly promised to do as she desired, and, inexpressibly happy and full of affection, the married pair returned from the apartment. At this very moment Bertalda came with some work-people, whom she had meanwhile ordered to attend her, and said with a fretful air, which she had assumed of late:

“Well, now the secret consultation is at an end, it is to be hoped the stone may come down.—Go out, workmen, and execute your business.”

The knight, however, highly resenting her impertinence, said in brief and very decisive terms, “The stone remains where it is.” He reproved Bertalda also for the vehemence that she had shown toward his wife. Whereupon the workmen, smiling with secret satisfaction, withdrew, while Bertalda, pale with rage, hurried away to her room.

When the hour of supper came, Bertalda was waited for in vain. They sent for her; but the domestic found her apartments empty, and brought back with him only a sealed billet, addressed to the knight. Trembling with alarm, he tore it open, and read:

"I feel with shame that I am only the daughter of a poor fisherman. That I for one moment forgot this, I will make expiation in the miserable hut of my parents. Farewell to you and your beautiful wife!"

Undine was troubled at heart. Most earnestly she entreated Huldbrand to hasten after their friend, who had flown, and bring her back with him. Alas! she had no occasion to urge him. His passion for Bertalda again burst forth with vehemence. He hurried round the castle, inquiring whether any one had seen which way the fair fugitive had gone. He could gain no information, and was already in the court on his horse, determining to take at a venture the road by which he had conducted Bertalda to the castle, when a shield-boy appeared, who assured him that he had met the lady on the path to the Black Valley. Swift as an arrow the knight sprang through the gate in the direction pointed out, without hearing Undine's voice of agony, as she cried after him from the window:

"To the Black Valley? Oh, not there! Huldbrand, not there! or if you will go, for Heaven's sake take me with you!"

But when she perceived that her calling was of no avail, she ordered her white palfrey to be instantly saddled, and followed the knight without permitting a single servant to accompany her.

XIV

THE Black Valley lies secluded far among the mountains. What its present name may be, I am unable to say. At the time of which I am speaking, the country people gave it this appellation from the deep obscurity produced by the shadows of lofty trees, more especially by a crowded

growth of firs that covered this region of moorland. Even the brook, which gushed out among the crags, and wound its way down a ravine into the valley, assumed there the same dark hue, and showed nothing of that cheerful aspect which streams are wont to wear that have the blue sky immediately over them.

It was now the dusk of evening, and the view between the heights had become extremely wild and gloomy. The knight, in great anxiety, skirted the border of the brook; he was at one time fearful that by delay he should allow the fugitive to advance too far before him; and then again, in his too eager rapidity, he was afraid he might somewhere overlook and pass by her, should she be desirous of concealing herself from his search. He had in the meantime penetrated pretty far into the valley, and might hope soon to overtake the maiden, provided he were pursuing the right track. The fear, indeed, that he might not as yet have gained this track made his heart beat with more and more of anxiety. In the stormy night, which was now impending, and which always hovered more fearfully over this valley, where would the delicate Bertalda shelter herself should he fail to find her? At last, while these thoughts were darting across his mind, he saw something white glimmer through the branches on the slope of the mountain. He felt quite certain that the object he discerned was Bertalda's robe, and he directed his course toward it. But his horse refused to go forward; he reared with a fury so uncontrollable, and his master was so unwilling to lose a moment, that (especially as he saw the thickets were impassable on horseback) he dismounted, and, having fastened his snorting steed to an elm, worked his way with caution through the matted underwood. The branches, moistened by the cold drops of the evening dew, keenly smote his forehead and cheeks; thunder muttered remotely

from the farther side of the mountains; and everything put on so strange and mystic an appearance that he began to feel a dread of the white figure which now lay only a short distance from him upon the ground. Still he could see with perfect clearness that it was a woman, either asleep or in a swoon, and dressed in long white garments, such as Bertalda had worn. Approaching quite near to her, he made a rustling with the branches and a ringing with his sword, but she did not move.

"Bertalda!" he cried, at first low, then louder and louder; still she heard him not. At last, when he uttered the dear name with an energy still more powerful, a hollow echo from the mountain summits around the valley returned the deadened sound "Bertalda!" Still the sleeper continued insensible. He stooped low, with a view to examine her countenance, but the duskiess of the valley and the obscurity of twilight would not allow him to distinguish her features. While with painful uncertainty he was bending over her, a flash of lightning suddenly shot across the valley. By this stream of light he saw a frightfully distorted visage close to his own, and a hoarse voice struck him with startling abruptness, "You enamoured shepherd, give me a kiss!"

Huldbbrand sprang upon his feet with a cry of horror, and the hideous figure rose with him.

"Home!" it cried with a deep murmur; "the fiends are abroad. Home! or I have you!" And it stretched toward him its long white arms.

"Malicious Kühleborn," exclaimed the knight with restored energy, "if Kühleborn you are, what business have you here?—what's your will, you goblin? There, take your kiss!" And in fury he flashed his sword at the form. But the form vanished like vapour; and a rush of water, giving the knight as good a drenching as wetting him to the skin

could make it, left him in no doubt with what foe he had been engaged.

"He wishes to frighten me back from my pursuit of Bertalda," said he to himself; "he imagines that I shall be terrified at his senseless enchantments, and resign the poor distressed girl to his power, so that he can wreak his vengeance upon her at will. But, impotent spirit of the flood! he shall find himself mistaken. What the heart of man can do, when it exerts the full force of its will, the strong energy of its noblest powers, of this the feeble enchanter has no comprehension."

He felt the truth of his words, and that, in thus giving utterance to his thoughts, he had inspired his heart with fresh courage. Fortune, too, appeared to favour him; for, before reaching his fastened steed, he distinctly heard the voice of Bertalda, where she was now weeping and now moaning not far before him, amid the roar of the thunder and the tempest, which every moment increased. He flew swiftly toward the sound, and found the trembling maiden just as she was attempting to climb the steep, and striving, to the extent of her power, to escape from the dreadful darkness of this valley. He stepped before her, while he spoke in tones of the most soothing tenderness; and bold and proud as her resolution had so lately been, she now felt nothing but the liveliest joy that the man whom she so passionately loved would rescue her from this frightful solitude, and, extending to her his arms of welcome, would still cast a brightness over her existence in their reunion at the castle. She followed almost unresisting, but so spent with fatigue that the knight was glad to support her to his horse, which he now hastily unfastened from the elm. His intention was to lift the fair wanderer upon him, and then to lead him carefully by the reins through the uncertain shades of this lowland tract.

But, owing to the mad appearance of Kühleborn, the horse had become unmanageable. Rearing and wildly snorting as he was, the knight must have used uncommon effort to mount the beast himself; to place the trembling Bertalda upon him was impossible. They were compelled, therefore, to return home on foot. While with one hand the knight drew the steed after him by the bridle, he supported the tottering Bertalda with the other. She exerted all the strength she had remaining, in order to escape from this vale of terrors as speedily as possible; but weariness weighed her down like lead, and a universal trembling seized her limbs, partly in consequence of what she had suffered from the extreme harassment with which Kühleborn had pursued her, and in part from her continual fear, arising from the roar of the tempest and thunder amid the mountain forest.

At last she slid from the arm of her conductor; and, sinking upon the moss, she said: "I can no more; let me lie here, my noble lord. I suffer the punishment due to my folly, and nothing can save me now; I must perish here through faintness and dismay."

"Never, my sweet friend, will I leave you!" cried Huldbrand, vainly trying to restrain the furious animal he was leading; for the horse was all in a foam, and began to chafe more ungovernably than before, till the knight was glad merely to keep him at such a distance from the exhausted maiden as would secure her from still greater fear and alarm. But hardly had he withdrawn five steps with the frantic steed when she began to call after him in the most sorrowful accents, fearful that he would actually leave her in this horrible wilderness. He was wholly at a loss what course to take. Gladly would he have given the enraged beast his liberty—he would have let him rush away amid the night, and exhaust his fury—had he not shuddered at

the thought that in this narrow defile his iron-shod hoofs might come trampling and thundering over the very spot where Bertalda lay.

While he was in this extreme peril and embarrassment, a feeling of delight, not to be expressed, shot through him when he heard the rumbling wheels of a wagon as it came slowly descending the stony slope behind them. He called out for help; answer was returned in the deep voice of a man, bidding them have patience, but promising assistance; and two horses of grayish white soon shone through the bushes, and near them their driver in the white frock of a carter; and next appeared a great sheet of white linen, with which the goods he seemed to be conveying were covered. The grays, in obedience to a shout from their master, stood still. He came up to the knight, and aided him in checking the fury of the foaming charger.

"I know well enough," said he, "what is the matter with the brute. The first time I travelled this way my horses were just as wilful and headstrong as yours. The reason is, a water-spirit haunts this valley, and a wicked wight they say he is, who takes delight in mischief and witcheries of this sort. But I have learned a charm; and if you will let me whisper it in your horse's ear, he will stand just as quiet as my silver grays there."

"Try your luck, then, and help us as quickly as possible!" said the impatient knight.

Upon this the wagoner drew down the head of the rearing courser close to his own, and spoke a half-dozen words in his ear. The animal instantly stood still and subdued; only his quick panting and smoking sweat showed his recent violence.

Huldbrand had little time to inquire by what means this had been effected. He agreed with the man that he should take Bertalda in his wagon, where, as he said, a

quantity of soft cotton was stowed, and he might in this way convey her to Castle Ringstetten; the knight could accompany them on horseback. But the horse appeared to be too much exhausted to carry his master so far. Seeing this, the man advised him to mount the wagon with Bertalda, and the horse could be tied to it behind.

"It is down hill," said he, "and the load for my grays will therefore be light."

The knight accepted his offer, and entered the wagon with Bertalda; the horse followed quietly, while the wagoner, sturdy and attentive, walked beside them.

Amid the silence and deepening obscurity of the night, the tempest became more and more remote and hushed; and in the comfortable feeling of their security and their commodious passage a confidential conversation arose between Huldbrand and Bertalda. He reproved her in the most gentle and affectionate terms for her resentful flight; she excused herself with humility and feeling, and from every tone of her voice it was evident—just as a lamp guides a lover amid the secrecy of night to his waiting mistress—that she still cherished her former affection for him. The knight felt the sense of what she said far more than the words themselves, and he answered simply to this sense—to the feeling and not the confession of love.

In the midst of this interchange of murmured feelings the wagoner suddenly shouted with a startling voice: "Up, my grays, up with your feet! Hey, my hearts, now together, show your spirit! Do it handsomely! remember who you are!"

The knight bent over the side of the wagon and saw that the horses had dashed into the midst of a foaming stream, and were, indeed, almost swimming, while the wheels of the wagon were rushing round and flashing like

mill-wheels, and the teamster had got on before to avoid the swell of the flood.

"What sort of road is this? It leads into the middle of the stream!" cried Huldbrand to his guide.

"Not at all, sir," returned he with a laugh, "it is just the contrary. The stream is running in the middle of our road. Only look about you, and see how all is overflowed."

The whole valley, in fact, was covered and in commotion as the waters, suddenly raised and visibly rising, swept over it.

"It is Kühleborn, that devil of a water-spirit, who wishes to drown us!" exclaimed the knight. "Have you no charm of protection against him, companion?"

"Charm! to be sure I have one," answered the waggoner; "but I can not and must not make use of it before you know who I am."

"Is this a time for riddles?" cried the knight. "The flood is every moment rising higher and higher, and what does it concern me to know who you are?"

"But mayhap it does concern you, though," said the guide, "for I am Kühleborn."

Thus speaking, he thrust his face into the wagon, and laughed with every feature distorted; but the wagon remained a wagon no longer, the grayish white horses were horses no longer; all was transformed to foam—all sank into the waves that rushed and hissed around them—while the waggoner himself, rising in the form of a gigantic surge, dragged the vainly struggling courser under the waters, then rose again huge as a liquid tower, burst over the heads of the floating pair, and was on the point of burying them irrecoverably beneath it.

At that instant the soft voice of Undine was heard through the uproar; the moon emerged through the clouds,

and by its light Undine became visible on the heights above the valley. She rebuked, she threatened the flood below her: the menacing and tower-like billow vanished muttering and murmuring; the waters gently flowed away under the beams of the moon; while Undine, like a hovering white dove, came sweeping down from the hill, raised the knight and Bertalda, and supported them to a green spot of turf, where, by her earnest efforts, she soon restored them, and dispelled their terrors. She then assisted Bertalda to mount the white palfrey on which she had herself been borne to the valley, and thus all three returned homeward to Castle Ringstetten.

XV

AFTER this last adventure they lived at the castle undisturbed and in peaceful enjoyment. The knight was more and more impressed with the heavenly goodness of his wife, which she had so nobly shown by her instant pursuit, and by the rescue she had effected in the Black Valley, where the power of Kühleborn again began. Undine herself felt that peace and security which the mind never fails to experience, so long as it has the consciousness of being in the path of rectitude; and she had this additional comfort that, in the newly awakened love and regard of her husband, Hope and Joy were rising upon her with their myriad beams of promise.

Bertalda, on the other hand, showed herself grateful, humble, and timid, without taking to herself any merit for so doing. Whenever Huldbrand or Undine began to explain to her their reason for covering the fountain, or their adventures in the Black Valley, she would earnestly en-

treat them to spare her the recital, since the fountain had occasioned her too much shame, and the Black Valley too much terror, to be made topics of conversation. With respect to these, therefore, she learned nothing further from either of them; and why was it necessary that she should be informed? Peace and Happiness had visibly taken up their abode at Castle Ringstetten. They enjoyed their present blessings in perfect security; and in relation to the future they now imagined it impossible that life could produce anything but pleasant flowers and fruits.

In this grateful union of friendship and affection winter came and passed away; and spring, with its foliage of tender green and its heaven of softest blue, succeeded to gladden the hearts of the inmates of the castle. The season was in harmony with their minds, and their minds imparted their own hue and tone to the season. What wonder, then, that its storks and swallows inspired them also with a disposition to travel! On a bright morning, while they were taking a walk down to one of the sources of the Danube, Huldbrand spoke of the magnificence of this noble stream, how it continued swelling as it flowed through countries enriched by its waters, with what splendour Vienna rose and sparkled on its banks, and how it grew lovelier and more imposing through almost the whole of its progress.

"It must be glorious to trace its course down to Vienna!" Bertalda exclaimed with warmth; but, immediately resuming the humble and modest demeanour she had recently shown, she paused and blushed in silence.

This slight circumstance was extremely touching to Undine; and with the liveliest wish to gratify her friend, she said, "And who or what shall prevent our taking this little voyage?"

Bertalda leaped up with delight, and the two women

the same moment began painting this enchanting trip on the Danube in the most brilliant colours. Huldbrand, too, agreed to the project with pleasure; only he once whispered with something of alarm in Undine's ear, "But at that distance Kühleborn becomes possessed of his power again?"

"Let him come, let him come," she answered with a laugh; "I shall be there, and he dares do none of his mischief in my presence."

Thus was the last impediment removed; they prepared for the expedition, and soon set out upon it with lively spirits and the brightest hopes.

But be not surprised, O man, if events generally happen very differently from what you expect. That malign power which lies in ambush for our destruction delights to lull its chosen victim asleep with sweet songs and golden delusions; while, on the other hand, the messenger of Heaven, sent to rescue us from peril, often thunders at our door with the violence of alarm and terror.

During the first days of their passage down the Danube they were unusually gratified. The farther they advanced upon the waters of this proud river the more picturesque and attractive the views became. But here, amid scenes otherwise most delicious, and from which they had promised themselves the purest delight, here again the stubborn Kühleborn, dropping all disguise, began to show his power of annoying them. He had no other means of doing this, indeed, than mere tricks and illusions, for Undine often rebuked the swelling waves or the contrary winds, and then the insolence of the enemy was instantly humbled and subdued; but his attacks were renewed, and Undine's reproofs again became necessary; so that the pleasure of this little water party was completely destroyed.

The boatmen, too, were continually whispering to one another in dismay, and eyeing their three superiors with distrust; while even the servants began to form dismal surmises, and to watch their master and mistress with looks of suspicion.

Huldbbrand often said to himself, in the silence of his soul: "This comes to pass when like marries not like—when a man forms an unnatural union with a woman of the sea." Still, excusing himself, as most of us are so fond of doing, he frequently pursued a train of thought like this: "I did not, in fact, know that she was a maid of the sea. It is my misfortune that all my steps are haunted and disturbed by the wild humours of her kindred, but it is not my crime."

Making reflections like these, he felt himself in some measure strengthened; but, on the other hand, he the more entertained a feeling of ill humour against Undine almost amounting to malevolence. He cast upon her glances of fretfulness and ill nature, and the unhappy wife but too well understood their meaning.

One day, grieved by this unkindness, as well as exhausted by her continual exertions to foil the artifices of Kühleborn, while rocked and soothed by the gentle motion of the bark, she toward evening fell into a deep slumber. But hardly had she closed her eyes when every person in the boat, in whatever direction he might look upon the water, saw the head of a man beyond imagination frightful: each head rose out of the waves, not like that of a person swimming, but perpendicular, as if firmly fastened to the watery mirror, and yet moving on with the bark. Every one wished to show to his companion what terrified himself, and each perceived the same expression of horror on the face of the other, only his hand and eye were directed to a different quarter, as if to a point where the

monster, half laughing and half threatening, rose opposite to himself.

When they wished to make one another understand the sight, and all cried out, "Look there!" "No, there!" the frightful heads all became visible to each, and the whole river around the boat swarmed with the most horrible faces. All raised a scream of terror at the sight, and Undine started from sleep. The moment she opened her eyes upon the mad group, the deformed visages disappeared. But Huldbrand was made furious by so many hideous visions. He would have burst out in wild imprecations had not Undine, with the most submissive air and in the gentlest tone of supplication, thus entreated him:

"For God's sake, my husband, do not express displeasure against me here—we are on the water!"

The knight was silent and sat down, absorbed in deep thought. Undine whispered in his ear: "Would it not be better, my love, to give up this foolish voyage and return to Castle Ringstetten in peace?"

But Huldbrand murmured wrathfully: "So I must become a prisoner in my own castle? and not be allowed to breathe a moment but while the fountain is covered? Would to Heaven that your cursed kindred——"

At these fatal words Undine pressed her fair hand on his lips with the most touching tenderness. He said no more, but, assuming an air of composure, pondered on all that she had lately warned him to avoid.

Bertalda, meanwhile, had given herself up to a crowd of wild and wandering thoughts. Of Undine's origin she knew a good deal, but not the whole; and the terrible Kühleborn especially remained to her an awful, an impenetrable mystery; never, indeed, had she once heard his name. Musing upon this series of wonders, she unclasped,

without being fully conscious of what she was doing, a gold necklace which Huldbrand, on one of the preceding days of their passage, had bought for her of a travelling trader; and she was now letting it swing in sport just over the surface of the stream while, in her dreamy mood, she enjoyed the bright reflection it threw on the water, so clear beneath the glow of evening. That instant a huge hand flashed suddenly up from the Danube, seized the necklace in its grasp, and vanished with it beneath the flood. Bertalda shrieked, and a laugh of mockery and contempt came peeling up from the depth of the river.

The knight could now restrain his wrath no longer. He started up, gazed fiercely upon the deep, poured forth a torrent of reproaches, heaped curses upon all who interfered with his friends or troubled his life, and dared them all, water-spirits or mermaids, to come within the sweep of his sword.

Bertalda, meantime, wept for the loss of the ornament so very dear to her heart, and her tears were to Huldbrand as oil poured upon the flame of his fury; while Undine held her hand over the side of the boat, dipping it in the waves, softly murmuring to herself, and only at times interrupting her strange, mysterious whisper, when she addressed her husband in a voice of entreaty: "Do not reprove me here, beloved; blame all others, as you will, but here, do not reprove me here. Surely you know the reason!" And, in truth, though he was trembling with excess of passion, he with strong effort kept himself from uttering a single word against her.

She then brought up in her wet hand, which she had been holding under the waves, a coral necklace of such exquisite beauty, such sparkling brilliance, as dazzled the eyes of all who beheld it. "Take this," said she, holding it out kindly to Bertalda; "I have ordered it to be brought,

to make some amends for your loss, and do not, dear heart, be troubled any more."

But the knight rushed between them, and, snatching the beautiful ornament out of Undine's hand, hurled it back into the flood, and in a flame of rage exclaimed: "So, then, you have a connection with them forever? In the name of all witches and enchanters, go and remain among them with your presents, you sorceress, and leave us human beings in peace!"

But poor Undine, with a look of mute amazement and eyes streaming with tears, gazed on him, her hand still stretched out, just as it was when she had so lovingly offered her brilliant gift to Bertalda. She then began to weep more and more, as if her heart would break, like a tender, innocent child, very bitterly grieved. At last, all wearied out, she said:

"Alas, dearest, all is over now—farewell! They shall do you no harm; only remain true, that I may have power to keep them from you. But I, alas! must go away, I must go away, even in this early dawn of youth and bliss. Oh, woe, woe, what have you done! Oh, woe, woe!"

And she vanished over the side of the boat. Whether she plunged into the stream, or whether, like water melting into water, she flowed away with it, they knew not, her disappearance so much resembled both united, and neither by itself. But she was gone, gliding on with the Danube, instantly and completely; only little waves were still whispering and sobbing around the boat, and they seemed almost distinctly to say: "Oh, woe, woe! Ah, remain true! Oh, woe!"

But Huldbrand, in a passion of burning tears, threw himself upon the deck of the bark, and a deep swoon soon wrapped the wretched man in a blessed forgetfulness of misery.

XVI

THE brief period of our mourning—ought we to view it as a misfortune or as a blessing? I mean that deep mourning of the heart which gushes up from the very well-springs of our being; that mourning which becomes so perfectly one with the lost object of our affection that this even ceases to be a lost thing to the sorrowing heart; and which desires to make the whole life a holy office dedicated to the image of the departed, until we too pass that bourne which separates it from our view.

Some men there are, indeed, who have this profound tenderness of spirit, and who thus consecrate their affections to the memory of the departed; but still their mourning softens into an emotion of gentle melancholy, having none of the intenseness of the first agony of separation. Other and foreign images intervene, and impress themselves upon the mind; we learn at last the transitory nature of everything earthly, even from that of our affliction; and I can not therefore but view it as a misfortune that the period of our mourning is so brief.

The Lord of Ringstetten learned the truth of this by experience; but whether he derived any advantage from the knowledge we shall discover in the sequel of this history. At first he could do nothing but weep, weep as bitterly as the poor amiable Undine had wept when he snatched out of her hand that brilliant ornament with which she so beautifully wished to make amends for Bertalda's loss. And then he stretched his hand out as she had done, and wept again like her with renewed violence. He cherished a secret hope that even the springs of life would at last become exhausted by weeping; and when we have been severely afflicted, has not a similar thought passed through the minds of many of us with a painful pleasure?

Bertalda wept with him; and they lived together a long while at Castle Ringstetten in undisturbed quiet, honouring the memory of Undine, and having almost wholly forgotten their former attachment.

Owing to this tender remembrance of Huldbrand, and to encourage him in conduct so exemplary, the good Undine, about this time, often visited his dreams; she soothed him with soft and affectionate caresses, and then went away again, weeping in silence; so that when he awoke he sometimes knew not how his cheeks came to be so wet—whether it was caused by her tears or only by his own.

But as time advanced these visions became less frequent, and the severity of the knight's sorrow was softened; still he might never while he lived, it may be, have entertained any other wish than thus to think of Undine in silence, and to speak of her in conversation, had not the old fisherman arrived unexpectedly at the castle, and earnestly insisted on Bertalda's returning with him as his child. He had received information of Undine's disappearance, and he was not willing to allow Bertalda to continue longer at the castle with the now unmarried knight. "For," said he, "whether my daughter loves me or not is not at present what I care to know; but her good name is at stake, and where that commands or forbids, not a word more need be said."

This resolution of the old fisherman, and the fearful solitude that, on Bertalda's departure, threatened to oppress the knight in every hall and passage of the deserted castle, brought a circumstance into distinct consciousness, which, owing to his sorrow for Undine, had of late been slumbering and completely forgotten—I mean his attachment to the fair Bertalda; and this he made known to her father.

The fisherman had many objections to make to the

proposed marriage. The old man had loved Undine with exceeding tenderness, and it was doubtful to his mind whether the mere disappearance of his beloved child could be properly viewed as her death. But were it even granted that her corpse was lying stiff and cold at the bottom of the Danube, or swept away by the current to the sea, still Bertalda would not be guiltless in her death; and it was unfitting for her to step into the place of the poor vanished wife. The fisherman, however, had felt a strong regard also for the knight. This, and the entreaties of his daughter, who had become much more gentle and respectful, as well as her tears for Undine, all exerted their influence; and he must at last have been forced to give up his opposition, for he remained at the castle without objection, and a courier was sent off express to Father Heilmann, who in former and happier days had united Undine and Huldbrand, requesting him to come and perform the ceremony at the knight's second marriage.

Hardly had the holy man read through the letter from the Lord of Ringstetten ere he set out upon the journey, and made much greater despatch on his way to the castle than the messenger had made in reaching him. Whenever his breath failed him in his rapid progress, or his old limbs ached with fatigue, he would say to himself: "Perhaps I may still be in season to prevent a sin; then sink not, weak and withered body, before I arrive at the end of my journey!" And with renewed vigour he pressed forward, hurrying on without rest or repose, until, late one evening, he entered the embowered courtyard of Castle Ringstetten.

The betrothed pair were sitting arm-in-arm under the trees, and the aged fisherman in a thoughtful mood sat near them. The moment they saw Father Heilmann they rose with a spring of joy, and pressed round him with eager

welcome. But he, in a few words, urged the bridegroom¹ to accompany him into the castle; and when Huldbrand stood mute with surprise, and delayed complying with his earnest request, the pious priest said to him:

“Why do I then defer speaking, my Lord of Ringstetten, until I can address you in private? There is no occasion for the delay of a moment. What I have to say as much concerns Bertalda and the fisherman as yourself; and what we can not avoid hearing at some time, it is best to hear as soon as possible. Are you then so very certain, Knight Huldbrand, that your first wife is actually dead? It hardly appears so to me. I will say nothing, indeed, of the mysterious state in which she may be now existing; in truth, I know nothing of it with certainty. But that she was a most devoted and faithful wife, so much is beyond all dispute. And for fourteen nights past she has appeared to me in a dream, standing at my bedside, wringing her tender hands in anguish, and imploring me with deep sighs: ‘Ah, prevent him, dear father! I am still living! Ah! save his life! ah! save his soul!’”

“What this vision of the night could mean I was at first unable to divine; then came your messenger, and I have now hastened hither not to unite, but, as I hope, to separate, what ought not to be joined together. Leave her, Huldbrand! Leave him, Bertalda! He still belongs to another; and do you not see on his pale cheek the traces of that grief which the disappearance of his wife has produced there? That is not the look of a bridegroom, and the spirit breathes the presage on my soul, ‘If you do not leave him, you will never, never be happy.’”

The three felt in their inmost hearts that Father Heilmann spoke the truth; but still they affected not to believe him, or they strove rather to resist their conviction.

¹ The betrothed are called bride and bridegroom in Germany.

Even the old fisherman had become so infatuated that he conceived the marriage to be now indispensable, as they had so often, during the time he had been with them, mutually agreed to the arrangement. They all, therefore, with a determined and gloomy eagerness, struggled against the representations and warnings of the holy man, until, shaking his head and oppressed with sorrow, he finally quitted the castle, not choosing to accept their offered shelter even for a single night, or indeed so much as to taste a morsel of the refreshment they brought him. Huldbrand persuaded himself, however, that the priest was a mere visionary, and sent at daybreak to a monk of the nearest monastery, who without scruple promised to perform the ceremony in a few days.

XVII

At the earliest moment of dawn, when night begins faintly to brighten into morning twilight, Huldbrand was lying on his couch, half waking and half sleeping. Whenever he attempted to compose himself to sleep he was seized with an undefined terror that made him shrink back from the enjoyment, as if his slumber were crowded with spectres. But whenever he made an effort to rouse himself, the wings of a swan seemed to be waving around him and soothing him with the music of their motion, and thus in a soft delusion of the senses he sank back into his state of imperfect repose.

At last, however, he must have fallen perfectly asleep; for, while the sound of the swan-wings was murmuring around him, he seemed to be lifted by their regular strokes and to be wafted far away over land and sea, and still their

music swelled on his ear most sweetly. "The music of the swan! the song of the swan!" he could not but repeat to himself every moment; "is it not a sure foreboding of death?" Probably it had still another meaning. All at once he seemed to be hovering over the Mediterranean Sea. A swan with her loud melody sang in his ear that this was the Mediterranean Sea; and while he was looking down upon the waves, they became transparent as crystal, so that he could see through them to the very bottom.

At this a thrill of delight shot through him, for he could see Undine, where she was sitting beneath the clear domes of crystal. It is true she was weeping very bitterly, and such was the excess of her grief that she bore only a faint resemblance to the bright and joyous being she had been during those happy days they had lived together at Castle Ringstetten, both on their arrival there and afterward, a short time before they set out upon their fatal passage down the Danube. The knight could not avoid dwelling upon all this with deep emotion, but it did not appear that Undine was aware of his presence.

Kühleborn had approached her, and was about to reprove her for weeping, when she assumed the boldness of superiority, and looked upon him with an air so majestic and commanding that he was well-nigh terrified and confounded by it.

"Although I too now dwell here beneath the waters," said she, "yet I have brought my soul with me; and therefore I may well be allowed to weep, little as you may conceive the meaning of such tears. They are even a blessed privilege, as everything is such a privilege to one gifted with the true soul."

He shook his head with disbelief of what she said, and, after musing a moment or two, replied: "And yet, niece,

you are subject to our laws of the element, as a being of the same nature with ourselves; and, should he prove unfaithful to you and marry again, you are obliged to take away his life."

"He remains a widower to this very hour," replied Undine, "and he still loves me with the passion of a sorrowful heart."

"He is, however, a bridegroom withal," said Kühleborn, with a chuckle of scorn; "and let only a few days wear away, and anon comes the priest with his nuptial blessing, and then you must go up and execute your share of the business, the death of the husband with two wives."

"I have not the power," returned Undine, with a smile. "Do you not remember? I have sealed up the fountain securely, not only against myself but all of the same race."

"Still, should he leave his castle," said Kühleborn, "or should he once allow the fountain to be uncovered, what then? for doubtless he thinks there is no great murder in such trifles."

"For that very reason," said Undine, still smiling amid her tears, "he is this moment hovering in spirit here over the Mediterranean Sea, and dreaming of this voice of warning which our conversation affords him. With a view to give him this warning, I have studiously disposed the whole vision."

That instant Kühleborn, inflamed with rage, looked up at the knight, wrathfully threatened him, stamped upon the ground, and then, swift as the passion that possessed him, sprang up from beneath the waves. He seemed to swell in his fury to the size of a whale. Again the swans began to sing, to wave their wings, to fly; the knight seemed to be soaring away over mountains and streams, and at last to alight at Castle Ringstetten, where he awoke upon his couch.

Upon his couch he actually did awake, and his attendant, entering at the same moment, informed him that Father Heilmann was still lingering in the neighbourhood; that the evening before he had met with him in the forest, where he was sheltering himself under a booth which he had formed by interweaving the branches of trees and covering them with moss and fine brushwood; and that to the question, "What he was doing there, since he had so firmly refused to perform the nuptial ceremony?" his answer was:

"There are yet other ceremonies to perform besides those at the altar of marriage; and though I did not come to officiate at the wedding, I can still officiate at a very different solemnity. All things have their season, and we must be ready for them all. Besides, marrying and mourning are by no means very far from each other, as every one, not wilfully blinded, must know full well."

In consequence of these words and of his dream, the knight made a variety of reflections, some wild and some mixed with alarm. But a man is apt to consider it very disagreeable to give over an affair which he has once settled in his mind as certain, and therefore all went on according to the old arrangement.

XVIII

SHOULD I relate to you the events of the marriage festival at Castle Ringstetten, it would seem as if you were viewing a crowded assemblage of bright and joyous things, but all overspread with a black mourning crape, through whose darkening veil the whole splendour appeared less

to resemble pleasure than a mockery of the nothingness of all earthly joys.

Not that any spectral visitation disturbed the scene of festivity; for the castle, as we well know, had been secured against the mischief and menaces of water-spirits. But the knight, the fisherman, and all the guests were unable to banish the feeling that the chief personage of the feast was still wanting, and that this chief personage could be no other than the amiable Undine, so dear to them all.

Whenever a door was heard to open, all eyes were involuntarily turned in that direction; and if it was nothing but the steward with new dishes, or the cup-bearer with a supply of wine of higher flavour than the last, they again looked down in sadness and disappointment; while the flashes of wit and merriment that had been passing at times from one to another ceased, and were succeeded by tears of mournful remembrance.

The bride was the least thoughtful of the company, and therefore the most happy; but even she occasionally found it difficult to realize the fact that she was sitting at the head of the table, wearing a green garland and gold-embroidered garments, while Undine was lying a corpse, stiff and cold, at the bottom of the Danube, or carried out by the current into the sea. For, ever since her father had suggested something of this sort, his words were continually sounding in her ear; and this day, in particular, they would neither fade from her memory nor yield to other thoughts.

Evening had scarcely arrived when the company returned to their homes; not dismissed by the impatience of the bridegroom, as wedding parties are sometimes broken up, but constrained solely by painful associations, joyless melancholy, and forebodings of evil. Bertalda retired with her maidens, and the knight with his attendants;

but these young bridemaids and bridemen, such was the gloomy tenor of this festival, made no attempt to amuse bride or bridegroom with the usual pleasantries and frolicsome good humour of the occasion.

Bertalda wished to awake a livelier spirit; she ordered them to spread before her a brilliant set of jewels, a present from Huldbrand, together with rich apparel and veils, that she might select from among them the brightest and most beautiful for her dress in the morning. The attendants rejoiced at this opportunity of pouring forth good wishes and promises of happiness to their young mistress, and failed not to extol the beauty of the bride with their liveliest eloquence. They became more and more absorbed in this admiration and flattery, until Bertalda at last, looking in a mirror, said with a sigh:

"Ah, but do you not see plainly how freckled I am growing? Look here on the side of my neck."

They looked at the place, and found the freckles, indeed, as their fair mistress had said; but they called them mere beauty-spots, the faintest touches of the sun, such as would only heighten the whiteness of her delicate complexion. Bertalda shook her head, and still viewed them as a blemish.

"And I could remove them," she said at last, sighing. "But the castle fountain is covered, from which I formerly used to have that precious water so purifying to the skin. Oh, had I this evening only a single flagon of it!"

"Is that all?" cried an alert waiting-maid, laughing, as she glided out of the apartment.

"She will not be so mad," said Bertalda, in a voice of inquiry and agreeably surprised, "as to cause the stone cover of the fountain to be taken off this very evening?"

That instant they heard the tread of men passing along the courtyard, and could see from the window where the

officious girl was leading them directly up to the fountain, and that they carried levers and other instruments on their shoulders.

"It is certainly my will," said Bertalda with a smile, "if it does not take them too long." And, pleased with the thought that the merest hint from her was now sufficient to accomplish what had formerly been refused with a painful reproof, she looked down upon their operations in the bright moonlight of the castle court.

The men seized the enormous stone, as if they must exert all their strength in raising it; some one of their number, indeed, would occasionally sigh when he recollected they were destroying the work of their former beloved mistress. Their labour, however, was much lighter than they had expected. It seemed as if some power from within the fountain itself aided them in raising the stone.

"It certainly appears," said the workmen to one another in astonishment, "as if the confined water were become a jet or spouting fountain." And the stone rose more and more, and, almost without the assistance of the work-people, rolled slowly away upon the pavement with a hollow sound. But an appearance, from the opening of the fountain, filled them with awe, as it rose like a white column of water. At first they imagined it to be a spouting fountain in good earnest, until they perceived the rising form to be a pale woman, veiled in white. She wept bitterly, raised her hands above her head, and wrung them with anguish, as with slow and solemn step she moved toward the castle. The servants shrank back, and fled from the fountain; while the bride, pale and motionless with horror, stood with her maidens at the window from which she had been viewing what passed without. When the figure had come close beneath their room, it looked up

to them and uttered the low moaning of misery, and Bertalda thought she recognised through the veil the pale features of Undine. But the mourning form passed on, as sad, reluctant, and lingering as if going to the place of execution. Bertalda screamed to her maids to call the knight; not one of them dared to stir from her place; and even the bride herself became again mute, as if trembling at the sound of her own voice.

While they continued standing at the window, overpowered with terror and motionless as statues, the mysterious wanderer entered the castle, ascended the well-known stairs, and traversed the well-known halls, her tears ever flowing in silent woe. Alas! with what different emotions had she once passed through these rooms!

The knight in the meantime had dismissed his attendants. Half undressed and in deep dejection, he was standing before a large mirror; a wax taper burned dimly beside him. At this moment he heard a low tapping at his door, the least perceptible touch of a finger. Undine had formerly tapped in this way when she wished to amuse him with her endearing sportiveness.

"It is all illusion! a mere freak of fancy!" said he to himself. "I must to my nuptial bed."

"You must, indeed, but to a cold one!" he heard a voice, choked with sobs, repeat from without; and then he saw in the mirror that the door of his room was slowly, slowly opened, and the white wanderer entered and gently secured it behind her.

"They have opened the fountain," said she in a low tone, "and now I am here, and you must die!"

He felt in the shock and death-pause of his heart that this must indeed be his doom; but, covering his eyes with his hands, he cried: "Do not, in my death-hour, do not drive me to distraction with terror! If you have a visage

of horror behind that veil, do not lift it! Take my life, but let me not see you."

"Alas!" replied the wanderer, "will you not then look upon me once more? I am as beautiful now as when you wooed me on the peninsula!"

"Oh, would to God it were so!" sighed Huldbrand, "and that I might die by a kiss from you!"

"Most willingly do I grant your wish, my dearest love," said she. And as she threw back her veil, her dear face met his view, smiling with celestial beauty. Trembling with love and the awe of approaching death, the knight stooped to give and receive the embrace. She kissed him with the holy kiss of Heaven; but she relaxed not her hold, pressing him more passionately in her arms, and weeping as if she would weep away her soul. Tears rushed into the knight's eyes, while a thrill both of bliss and agony shot through his heart, until he at last expired, sinking softly back from her fair arms, and resting upon the pillow of his couch, a corpse.

"I have wept him to death!" said she to some domestics who met her in the ante-chamber; and passing through the terrified group, she went slowly out and disappeared in the fountain.

XIX

FATHER HEILMANN returned to the castle as soon as the death of the Lord of Ringstetten was made known in the neighbourhood; and he arrived at the very hour when the monk who had married the unfortunate couple was hurrying from the door, overcome with dismay and horror.

When Father Heilmann was informed of this, he re-

plied: "It is all well; and now come the duties of my office, in which I have no need of an assistant."

He then began to console the bride, now become a widow, small as was the advantage her worldly and light-minded spirit derived from his kindness.

The old fisherman, on the other hand, though severely afflicted, was far more resigned in regard to the fate of his son-in-law and the calamity of his daughter; and while Bertalda could not refrain from accusing Undine as a murderess and sorceress, the old man calmly said: "The event, after all, could not have happened otherwise. I see nothing in it but the judgment of God; and no one, I am sure, could have his heart more pierced by the death of Huldbrand than she who was obliged to accomplish his doom, the poor forsaken Undine!"

He then assisted in arranging the funeral solemnities, as suited the rank of the deceased. The knight was to be interred in a village churchyard, in whose consecrated ground were the graves of his ancestors: a place which they, as well as he, had endowed with rich privileges and gifts. His shield and helmet lay upon his coffin, ready to be lowered with it into the grave, for Lord Huldbrand of Ringstetten had died the last of his race; the mourners began their sorrowful march, lifting the melancholy wail of their dirges amid the calm, unclouded heaven; Father Heilmann preceded the procession, bearing a lofty crucifix, while Bertalda followed in her misery, supported by her aged father.

While proceeding in this manner they suddenly saw, in the midst of the dark-habited mourning women in the widow's train, a snow-white figure, closely veiled, and wringing its hands in the wild vehemence of sorrow. Those next to whom it moved, seized with a secret dread, started back or on one side; and owing to their movements the

others, next to whom the white stranger now came, were terrified still more, and this produced almost a complete disarrangement of the funeral train. Some of the military escort ventured to address the figure, and attempt to remove it from the procession; but it seemed to vanish from under their hands, and yet was immediately seen advancing again, with slow and solemn step, among the followers of the body. At last, in consequence of the shrinking away of the attendants, it came close behind Bertalda. It now moved so slowly that the widow was not aware of its presence, and it walked meekly behind, neither suffering nor creating disturbance.

This continued until they came to the churchyard, where the procession formed a circle round the open grave. Then Bertalda perceived her unbidden companion, and, prompted half by anger and half by terror, she commanded her to depart from the knight's place of final rest. But the veiled figure, shaking her head with a gentle refusal, raised her hands toward Bertalda in lowly supplication, by which she was greatly moved, and could not but remember with tears how Undine had shown such sweetness of spirit on the Danube when she held out to her the coral necklace.

Father Heilmann now motioned with his hand, and gave orders for all to observe perfect stillness, that over the body, whose mound was well-nigh formed, they might breathe a prayer of silent devotion. Bertalda kneeled without speaking; and all kneeled, even the grave-diggers who had now finished their work. But when they rose from this breathing of the heart, the white stranger had disappeared. On the spot where she had kneeled a little spring of silver brightness was gushing out from the green turf, and it kept swelling and flowing onward with a low murmur, till it almost encircled the mound of the knight's

grave; it then continued its course, and flowed into a calm lake which lay by the side of the consecrated ground. Even to this day the inhabitants of the village point out the spring; and they can not but cherish the belief that it is the poor deserted Undine, who in this manner still fondly encircles her beloved in her arms.

END OF UNDINE

SINTRAM AND HIS COMPANIONS

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

FOLKO OF MONTFAUÇON was and is peculiarly endeared to my heart as a true type of that old French chivalric glory which now only emerges in individual appearances—for instance, beautifully in the Vendéan wars, which, though failing in victory, were rich in honours. With these feelings the poet could not forbear from arraying him in the colours of his own escutcheon, and assigning to him its emblems, and even in some measure denoting him by his own ancestral name; for Foulqué we were called in old times, which was probably derived, according to our Norman descent, from the Northlandish name Folko, or Fulko; and a castle “Montfauçon” was among our ancient possessions. But here that only properly concerns the noble pair Folko and Gabrielle, as interwoven in the tale of “Sintram.” The tale itself is the offspring of my own fantasy, immediately suggested by Albrecht Dürer’s admirable woodcut of “The Knight, Death, and Satan,” the birthday gift of a former friend, with the happy proposal that I should frame from it a romance or a ballad. It became more than this; and the present tale shows it to be so, being supported by divers traditions, in part given to me orally, of the Germanic northern customs in war and festivity, and in many other relationships besides. The legend indicated at the conclusion of the information respecting Sintram, of the terrific stories of the north, transformed into southern

splendour and mirthful dreams, would really then have been executed, and arose more clearly from the fantastic tones of a congenial harpsichord player, who accidentally met the poet. Partly by other avocations, and partly by interruptions from without, the project has been hitherto driven into the background. But it still lives within me; and now again, from the powerful and yet childlike harmonies of the Northman Ole Bull, seems to stir more vigorously and brightly than before. Who knows what yet may happen? Meanwhile here gushes from me a song of salutation to one who, honoured by me as master, is not less dear to me as a man:

Profoundly dreamt a youth on Norland waste;
But no—it is not waste where fairy rings
Reflect the past as well as future things,
When love and woe in boding tones are drest.
They greeted him, they kissed him, and retreated;
They left for him an instrument of sound,
Whose forceful strings with highest deeds could bound,
And yet with childish frolics be entreated.
He wakes—the gift he seizes, comprehending
Its sweet mysterious pleasure how to prove,
And pours it forth in pure harmonious blending.
O may'st thou, ever victor, joyful move,
Thou Northland sailor, on life's voyage wending,
Conscious of God within thee and above!

Fouqué.

SINTRAM AND HIS COMPANIONS



I

IN the castle of Drontheim many knights were assembled to hold council on the affairs of the kingdom; and after their debate they remained till past midnight carousing together around the huge stone table in the vaulted hall. A rising storm drove the snow wildly against the rattling windows, all the thick oak doors groaned, the massive locks shook, the castle clock slowly and heavily struck the hour of one.

At that instant a boy, pale as death, with disordered hair and closed eyes, rushed into the hall, uttering a wild scream of terror. He stopped behind the richly carved seat of the mighty Biorn, clung to the knight with both his hands, and shrieked in a piercing voice: "My knightly father! Death and another are closely pursuing me!"

An awful stillness reigned suddenly in the whole assembly, broken only by the agonized shrieks of the boy. But one of Biorn's numerous retainers, an old esquire, known by the name of Rolf the Good, advanced toward the terrified child, took him in his arms, and half chanted this prayer: "O Father, help thy servant! I believe, and yet I can not believe." The boy, as if in a dream, at once loosened his hold of the knight; and the good Rolf bore

him from the hall unresisting, yet still shedding hot tears and murmuring confused sounds.

The lords and knights looked at one another in mute amazement, until the mighty Biorn said, in a fierce but scornfully deriding tone: "Do not suffer yourselves to be disturbed by the appearance of that strange being. He is my only son; and has been in this state since he was five years old: he is now twelve. I am, therefore, accustomed to see him so, though at the first I too was disquieted by it. The attack comes upon him only once in the year, and always at this same time. But forgive me for having spent so many words on my poor Sintram, and let us pass on to some worthier subject for our discourse."

Again there was silence for some minutes. Then a solitary voice began here and there to attempt renewing the former conversation, but without success. Two of the youngest and most joyous spirits began a drinking-song; but the storm howled and raged so wildly without that their mirth was soon checked. And now they all sat silent and motionless in the lofty hall; the lamp flickered under the vaulted roof; the whole party of knights looked like pale, lifeless images, dressed up in gigantic armour.

Then arose the chaplain of the castle of Drontheim, the only priest among the knightly throng, and said: "Sir Biorn, our eyes and thoughts have all been directed to you and your son in a wonderful manner; but so it has been ordered by the providence of God. You perceive that we can not withdraw them, and you would do well to tell us exactly what you know concerning the fearful state in which we have seen your boy. Perchance such a solemn narration as I look forward to might be of much use to our disturbed minds."

Biorn cast a look of displeasure on the priest, and answered: "You are more concerned in the history than

either you or I could desire. Excuse me if I am unwilling to trouble these light-hearted warriors with such a rueful tale."

But the chaplain approached nearer to the knight, and said, in a firm yet very mild tone: "Sir Knight, up to this moment it rested with you to relate or not to relate it; but now that you have so strangely hinted at the share which I have had in your son's calamity, I must positively request that you will repeat word for word how everything came to pass. My honour demands such an explanation, and that will weigh with you as much as with me."

In stern compliance Biorn bowed his haughty head, and began the narration:

"This time seven years ago I was keeping the Christmas feast with my assembled followers. We have many venerable old customs which have descended to us from our forefathers; as, for instance, that of placing a gilded boar's head on the table, and making thereon knightly vows of daring and wondrous deeds. Our chaplain there, who in those days used frequently to visit me, was never a friend to keeping up such traditions of the ancient heathen world. Men of his sort were not much in favour in those olden times."

"My excellent predecessors," interrupted the chaplain, "were infinitely more concerned in obtaining the favour of God than that of the world, and they were not unsuccessful in their aim. By that means they converted your ancestors; and if I can in like manner be of service to you, even your jeering will not vex me."

With looks still darker, and an involuntary shudder, the knight resumed: "Yes, yes; I know all your promises and threats concerning an invisible power; and how they are meant to persuade us to part more readily with

whatever of this world's goods we may possess. There was a time when such belonged to me. Occasionally a strange fancy seizes me, and I feel as if ages had passed since then, and as if I were the only survivor, so fearfully is everything changed. But now I recall that the greater part of this noble company knew me in my days of happiness, and have seen my wife, my lovely Verena."

He pressed his hands on his eyes, and many thought that he wept. The tempest was now lulled; the soft light of the moon shone through the windows, and her beams played on his wild features. Suddenly he started up, so that his heavy armour rattled with a fearful sound, and he cried out in a thundering voice: "Shall I turn a monk, because she has become a nun? No, crafty priest; your webs are too thin to catch flies of my sort."

"I have nothing to do with webs," said the chaplain. "In all openness and sincerity have I put heaven and hell before you during the space of six years; and you gave full consent to the step which the holy Verena took. But what all that has to do with your son's sufferings I have yet to learn; and I wait for your further narration."

"You may wait long enough for that," said Biorn, with a sneer. "Sooner shall——"

"Swear not!" said the chaplain in a loud commanding tone, and his eyes flashed fearfully.

"Hurra!" cried Biorn in wild affright; "hurra! Death and his companion are let loose!" and he dashed madly out of the chamber and down the steps. The loud, wild notes of his horn were heard summoning his retainers, and presently the clatter of horses' feet on the frozen courtyard gave token of their departure.

The knights retired, silent and shuddering, while the chaplain remained alone at the huge stone table, engaged in earnest prayer.

II

WHEN some time had elapsed, the good Rolf returned with slow and soft steps, and started with surprise at finding the hall deserted. The chamber where he had been occupied in quieting and soothing the unhappy child was in a part of the castle so distant that he had heard nothing of the knight's hasty departure. The chaplain related to him all that had passed, and then said: "But, my good Rolf, I much wish to ask you concerning those strange words with which you seemed to lull poor Sintram to rest. They sounded like sacred words, and no doubt they are, but I could not understand them. 'I believe, and yet I can not believe.'"

"Reverend sir," answered Rolf, "I remember that from my earliest years no history in the Gospels has taken such hold of me as that of the child possessed with a devil, which the disciples were not able to cast out; but when our Saviour came down from the mountain where he had been transfigured, he broke the bonds wherewith the evil spirit had held the miserable child bound. I always felt as if I must have known and loved that boy, and been his playfellow in his happy days; and when I grew older, then the distress of the father on account of his lunatic son lay heavy at my heart. Surely it must all have been a foreboding of the wretched state of our young lord, whom I love as if he were my own child; and now the words of the weeping father in the Gospel often come into my mind, 'I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief'; and something of the sort I may very likely have repeated to-day, as a chant or a prayer. Reverend father, when I reflect how one dreadful imprecation of the father has kept its withering hold on the son, all seems dark before me; but, God be praised! faith and hope again bring light into my mind."

"Good Rolf," said the priest, "I can not clearly understand what you say about the unhappy Sintram, for I do not know when and how this affliction came upon him. If no oath or solemn promise binds you to secrecy, will you make known to me all that is connected with it?"

"Most willingly," replied Rolf. "I have long desired to have an opportunity of so doing; but you have been almost always separated from us. I dare not now leave the sleeping boy any longer alone, and to-morrow, at the earliest dawn, I must take him to his father. Will you come with me to our poor Sintram's room?"

The chaplain at once took up the small lamp that Rolf had brought with him, and they set off together along the vaulted passage. When they reached the distant chamber they found the suffering child fast asleep. As the light of the lamp fell on his countenance, it showed his ashy paleness. The chaplain stood gazing at him for some time, and at length said:

"Certainly from his birth his features were always sharp and strongly marked, but now they are almost fearfully so for such a child. And yet, in spite of the strange expression they give, I can not help having a kindly feeling toward him, whether I will or not."

"Most true, dear sir," answered Rolf. And it was evident how his whole heart rejoiced at any words which betokened affection or compassion for his beloved young lord. He placed the lamp where its light could not disturb the sleeping child, and, seating himself close by the priest, he began to speak:

"During that Christmas feast of which my lord was talking to you, he and his followers discoursed much concerning the German merchants, and the best means of keeping down the increasing pride and power of the larger trading towns. At length Biorn laid his impious hand on

the golden boar's head, and swore to put to death without mercy every German trader whom fate, in what way soever, might bring alive into his power. The gentle Verena turned pale, and would have interposed—but it was too late, the fearful word was uttered. And immediately afterward, as though the great enemy of souls were determined at once to secure with fresh bonds the wretched being who was thus devoted to him, a warder came into the hall to announce that two citizens of a trading town in Germany—an old man and his son—had been shipwrecked on this coast, and were now without the gates, asking hospitality of the lord of the castle. The knight could not refrain from shuddering; but he thought himself bound by his rash vow, and by that accursed remnant of heathenism. We, his retainers, were commanded to assemble in the castle-yard, armed with sharp spears, which were to be hurled at the defenceless strangers at the first signal made to us. For the first, and I trust the last time in my life, I refused to obey the commands of my lord; my refusal was uttered in a loud voice, and with the firmest determination. The Almighty, who alone knows whom he will accept and whom he will reject, gave me at that moment the strength and resolution I needed. And Biorn might perceive whence the refusal of his faithful old servant arose, and that it was worthy of respect. He said to me, half in anger and half in scorn: 'Go up to my wife's apartments: her attendants are running to and fro, perhaps she is ill. Go up, Rolf the Good, and remain with the women, who seem the fittest company for you.' I thought to myself, 'Jest on'; but I went silently the way that he had pointed out to me. On the stairs I was met by two strange and very awful-looking beings, whom I never had seen before; and I am still at a loss to think how they got into the castle. One of them was a great,

tall man, frightfully pallid and thin; the other was a dwarf-like man, with a most hideous countenance and features. Indeed, when I collected my thoughts and looked carefully at him, it appeared to me——”

Low moanings and convulsive movements of the boy here interrupted the narrative. Rolf and the chaplain hastened to his bedside, and perceived that his countenance wore an expression of fearful agony, and that he was struggling in vain to open his eyes. The priest made the sign of the cross over him, and immediately peace seemed to be restored, and his sleep again became calm and quiet; then they returned softly to their seats.

“You see,” said Rolf, “that it will not do to attempt a more precise description of those two awful beings. Suffice it to say that they went down into the courtyard, and that I proceeded to my lady’s apartments. I found the gentle Verena almost fainting with terror and overwhelming anxiety, and I hastened to restore her with some of those remedies which the knowledge God has given me of the healing virtues of many herbs and minerals enabled me to apply. But scarcely had she recovered her senses when, with that air of calm resolve which you know belongs to her, she desired me to conduct her down to the courtyard, saying that she must either put a stop to the fearful doings of this night or herself fall a sacrifice. Our way took us by the little bed of the sleeping Sintram. Alas! I can not keep from tears when I think how evenly his gentle breath then came and went, and how sweetly he smiled in his peaceful slumbers.”

The old man put his hands to his eyes and wept bitterly, but soon he resumed his sad story: “As we approached the lowest window of the staircase, we could hear distinctly the voice of the elder merchant, and, on looking

out, the light of the torches showed me his noble features, as well as the bright, youthful countenance of his son. 'I take Almighty God to witness,' cried he, 'that I had no evil thought against this house! But surely I must have fallen unawares among heathen; it can not be that I am in a Christian knight's castle; and if you are indeed heathen, then kill us at once. And you, my beloved son, be patient and of good courage; in heaven we shall learn why it was ordained that we should meet our fate here without one chance of escape.' I thought I could see those two fearful ones amid the throng of armed retainers. The pale one had a huge curved sword in his hand, the little one held a spear notched in a strange fashion. Verena tore open the window, and the silvery tones of her voice were heard above the storm of that wild night as she cried out: 'My dearest lord and husband, for the sake of your only child, have pity on those harmless men! Save them from a bloody death, and resist the temptation of the evil spirit.' The knight answered in his fierce wrath—but I can not repeat his words. He staked his child on the desperate cast; he called death and the devil to see that he kept his word—but, hush! the boy is again moaning. Let me bring the dark tale quickly to a close. Biorn commanded his followers to strike, casting on them those fierce looks which have gained him the title of Biorn of the Fiery Eyes; while at the same time the two frightful strangers seemed to bestir themselves in the crowd with more activity than before. Then Verena called out, in the extremity of her anguish, 'Help, O God, my Saviour!' Those two dreadful figures disappeared, and the knight and his retainers, as if seized with blindness, rushed wildly one against the other, but without doing injury to themselves or yet succeeding in striking the merchants, who had so nearly fallen victims to Biorn's savage cruelty. They bowed rev-

erently toward Verena, and with calm thanksgivings departed through the castle gates, which at that moment had been burst open by a violent gust of wind, and now gave a free passage to any who would go forth. The lady and I were still standing bewildered on the stairs, when I fancied I saw the two fearful forms glide close by me; but there was such a cloudy, unreal look about them that I doubted, till Verena called to me, 'Rolf, did you see a tall, pale man, and a little hideous one with him, pass just now up the staircase?' I flew after them; but, alas! when I reached the poor boy's room, I found him already in the same state in which you saw him a few hours ago. Ever since, the attack has come on him regularly at this time, and he is in all respects fearfully changed. The lady of the castle did not fail to discern the avenging hand of Heaven in this calamity; and as the knight, her husband, instead of showing signs of repentance, added each day to the number of his violent deeds, she resolved to take refuge in a cloister; and there, by unremitting prayer, to obtain mercy in time and eternity for herself and her unhappy child."

Rolf was silent; and the chaplain said, after some moments' reflection: "I now understand why, six years ago, Biorn confessed his guilt to me in general terms, and consented that his wife should take the veil. Some faint compunction must then have stirred within him, and perhaps the traces of it may yet exist. Anyhow, it was impossible that so tender a flower as Verena could remain longer in such rough keeping. But who is there now to watch over and protect our poor Sintram?"

"The prayers of his mother are his safeguard," answered Rolf. "Reverend sir, when the first dawn of day appears, as it does now, and when the morning breeze plays lightly around, they always bring to my mind the soft-

beaming eyes of my lady, and I again seem to hear the sweet tones of her voice."

"And let us add our devout supplications to the Lord," said the chaplain; and he and Rolf knelt in silent and earnest prayer by the bed of the pale sufferer, who soon began to smile as he lay still dreaming.

III

THE rays of the sun shining brightly into the room awoke Sintram, and, raising himself, he looked angrily at the chaplain, and said: "So there is a priest in the castle! And yet that accursed dream continues to torment me, even in his very presence! A pretty sort of priest he must be!"

"My child," answered the chaplain in the mildest tone, "I have prayed for you most fervently, and I shall never cease doing so—but God alone is almighty."

"You speak very impertinently to the son of the great knight Biorn," cried Sintram. "'My child!' indeed. If those horrible dreams had not been again haunting me, you would make me laugh heartily."

"My young lord," said the chaplain, "I am by no means surprised that you should not recognise me, for in truth neither should I know you again." And his eyes filled with tears as he spoke.

The good Rolf looked sorrowfully in the boy's face, saying: "Ah! my dear young master, you are so much better than you would make people believe! Why did you speak in that way? Your memory is so good that you must surely recollect your kind old friend the chaplain, who used formerly to be constantly at the castle, and to

bring you so many presents—bright-coloured pictures of saints and beautiful songs? ”

“ I know all that very well,” replied Sintram thoughtfully. “ My blessed mother was alive in those days.”

“ Our gracious lady is still living, God be praised! ” said the good Rolf.

“ But she does not live for us, poor sick creatures that we are! ” cried Sintram. “ And why will you not call her blessed? Surely she knows nothing about my dreams? ”

“ Yes, she does know of them,” said the chaplain, “ and she prays to God on your behalf. But take heed, and restrain that wild, haughty temper of yours. It might, indeed, come to pass that she no longer knew anything about your dreams, and that would be if you were to die; and then the holy angels would also cease to know anything of you.”

Sintram fell back on his bed as if thunderstruck; and Rolf said with a gentle sigh, “ You should not speak so severely to my poor sick child, reverend sir.”

The boy again sat up, and with streaming eyes he turned toward the chaplain, saying in a kind and gentle tone: “ Let him do as he pleases, you good, tender-hearted Rolf; he knows very well what he is about. Would you reprove him if I were slipping down a rocky precipice, and he were to catch me roughly by the hair of my head in order to save me? ”

The priest looked at him with emotion, and was about to give utterance to some kind expression, when Sintram suddenly sprang off the bed and asked after his father. As soon as he heard of the knight’s departure, he would not remain another hour in the castle; and when both the chaplain and the old esquire expressed their fears lest a rapid journey should be hurtful to him before he had shaken off the effects of his late attack, he said to them:

"Believe me, reverend sir, and good old Rolf, if I were not subject to these hideous dreams there would not be a bolder youth in the whole world; and even as it is, I am not so far behind the very best. Besides, till another year has passed, there is no fear of my dreams again troubling me."

Rolf obeyed a somewhat imperious sign from his young master, and went to prepare the horses. No sooner were they brought out than the boy threw himself into his saddle, and, taking a courteous leave of the chaplain, he dashed along the frozen valley that lay between the snow-clad mountains. He had not ridden far, in company with his old attendant, when he heard a strange, indistinct sound proceeding from a neighbouring cleft in the rock; it was partly like the clapper of a small mill, but mingled with that were hollow groans and other tones of distress. They directed their horses toward the place whence the sounds came, and a wonderful sight presented itself before them.

A tall man, deadly pale, in a pilgrim's garb, was striving with violent though unsuccessful efforts to work his way out of the snow and to get up the mountain; and at each exertion which he made a quantity of bones, which were hanging loosely all about his garments, rattled one against the other, and caused the mysterious sound already mentioned. Rolf, much terrified, crossed himself, while the bold Sintram called out to the stranger:

"What art thou doing there? Give an account of thy solitary labours."

"I live in death," replied that other one with a fearful grin.

"Whose are those bones which hang about thee?"

"They are relics, young sir."

"Art thou a pilgrim?"

"I have no rest, no quiet; I go up and down the land."

"Thou must not perish here in the snow before my eyes."

"That I will not."

"Thou must come up and sit on my horse."

"That I will do."

And all at once he started up out of the snow with surprising strength and agility, and sprang on the horse behind Sintram, claspings him tight in his long arms. The animal, startled by the rattling of the bones, and as if seized with madness, rushed away through the most trackless passes. The boy soon found himself alone with his strange companion; for Rolf, breathless with fear, spurred on his horse in vain, and remained far behind them. After slipping down the steep mountain side, which was covered with snow, into a narrow defile, the horse seemed somewhat to slacken his pace, but yet continued to snort and foam as before, and could not be controlled. Still, his headlong course being now changed into a rough irregular trot, Sintram was able to breathe more freely, and to begin discourse with his unknown companion.

"Draw thy garment closer round thee, thou pale man: the bones will then rattle less, and I shall be able to curb my horse."

"It would be of no avail, boy; it would be of no avail. The bones must rattle."

"Do not clasp me so tight with thy long arms, they are so cold."

"It can not be helped, boy; it can not be helped. Be content. For my long cold arms are not pressing yet on thy heart."

"Do not breathe on me so with thy icy breath. All my strength is departing."

"I must breathe, boy; I must breathe. But do not complain. I am not blowing thee away."

The strange dialogue here came to an end; for to Sintram's surprise he found himself on an open plain, over which the sun was shining brightly, and at no great distance before him he descried his father's castle. While he was doubting as to whether he might invite the unearthly pilgrim to rest there, this one put an end to his hesitation by throwing himself suddenly off the horse, whose wild course was checked by the shock. Raising his forefinger, he said to the boy:

"I know old Biorn of the Fiery Eyes well: perhaps but too well. Commend me to him. It will not need to tell him my name; he will recognise me by the description you can give of me." So saying, the ghastly stranger turned aside into a thick firwood, and disappeared among the tangled branches.

Slowly and thoughtfully Sintram rode on toward his father's castle, his horse being now again quiet and almost exhausted. He scarcely knew how much he ought to relate of his wonderful adventure, and he also felt oppressed with anxiety for the good Rolf, who had remained so far behind. He found himself at the castle gate sooner than he had expected; the drawbridge was lowered, the doors were thrown open; an attendant led the youth into the great hall, where Biorn was sitting all alone at a huge table, with many flagons and glasses before him, and suits of armour ranged on either side of him. It was his daily custom, by way of company, to have the armour of his ancestors, with closed visors, placed all round the table at which he sat. The father and son began conversing.

"Where is Rolf?"

"I do not know, father; I lost sight of him in the mountains."

"I will have Rolf shot if he can not take better care than that of my only child."

"Then, father, you will have your only child shot at the same time, for without Rolf I can not live; and if even one single dart is aimed at him, I will be there to receive it, and to shield his true and faithful heart."

"Is it so? Then Rolf shall not be shot, but he shall be driven from the castle."

"In that case, father, you will see me go away also; and I will give myself up to serve him in forests, in mountains, in caves."

"Is it so? Well, then, Rolf must remain here."

"That is just what I think, father."

"Were you riding quite alone?"

"No, father; but with a strange pilgrim: he said that he knew you very well—perhaps too well." And thereupon Sintram began to relate all that had passed with the pale man.

"I know him also very well," said Biorn. "He is half crazed and half wise, as we sometimes are astonished at seeing that people can be. But do you, my boy, go to rest after your wild journey. I give you my word that Rolf shall be kindly received if he arrives here; and that if he does not come soon he shall be sought for in the mountains."

"I trust to your word, father," said Sintram, with a mixture of pride and humility in his tone; and he proceeded to obey the command of the grim lord of the castle.

IV

It was toward evening when Sintram awoke. He saw the good Rolf sitting at his bedside, and looked up in the old man's kind face with a smile of unusual innocent bright-

ness. But soon again his dark brows were knit, and he asked: "How did my father receive you, Rolf? Did he say a harsh word to you?"

"No, my dear young lord, he did not—indeed, he did not speak to me at all. At first he looked very wrathful; but he controlled himself, and ordered a servant to bring me food and wine to refresh me, and afterward to take me to your room."

"He might have kept his word better. But he is my father, and I must not judge him too severely. I will now go down to the evening meal."

So saying, he sprang up and threw on his furred mantle. But Rolf stopped him, and said in a tone of entreaty:

"My dear young master, you would do better to take your meal to-day alone here in your own apartment. For there is a guest with your father, in whose company I should be very sorry to see you. If you will remain here, I will entertain you with pleasant tales and songs."

"There is nothing in the world which I should like better, dear Rolf," answered Sintram, "but it does not befit me to shun the company of any man. Tell me, whom should I find with my father?"

"Alas!" said the old man, "you have already found him in the mountain. Formerly, when I used to ride about the country with Biorn, we often met with him, but I was forbidden to tell you anything about him; and this is the first time that he has ever come to the castle."

"Oh, the crazy pilgrim!" replied Sintram; and he stood some moments buried in thought, and apparently weighing the whole matter in his mind. At last rousing himself, he said: "Dear old friend, I would most willingly stay here with you this evening and listen to your stories and songs, and all the pilgrims in the world should not make me leave this quiet room. But one thing must be

considered. I feel a kind of dread of that pale, tall man, and by such fears no true knight's son can ever suffer himself to be overcome. So do not be angry, dear Rolf, if I determine to go and look that strange palmer in the face." And he shut the door of the chamber behind him, and with firm and echoing steps proceeded to the hall.

The pilgrim and the knight were sitting opposite to each other at the great table, on which many lights were burning; and it was fearful, among all the lifeless armour, to see those two tall, grim men move, and eat, and drink. As the pilgrim looked up on the boy's entrance, Biorn said:

"You know him already: he is my only child, and your fellow-traveller this morning."

The palmer fixed an earnest look on Sintram, and answered, shaking his head, "I do not know what you mean."

Then the boy burst forth impatiently: "It must be confessed that you deal very unfairly by us! You say that you know my father but too well, and now it appears that you do not know me at all. Who allowed you to ride on his horse, and in return had his good steed driven almost wild? Answer if you can!"

Biorn put on a somewhat displeased look, but was, in truth, delighted at any such outbreak of his son's unruly temper, while the pilgrim shuddered as if terrified and overcome by some secret irresistible power. At length with a trembling voice he said: "Yes, yes, my dear young lord, you are surely quite right; you are perfectly right in everything which you may please to assert."

Then the lord of the castle laughed aloud, and said: "Why, you strange pilgrim, what is become of all your wonderfully fine speeches and warnings now? Has the

boy all at once struck you dumb and powerless? Beware, you prophet messenger, beware!"

But the palmer cast a fearful look on Biorn, which seemed to quench the light of his fiery eyes, and said in thundering accents: "Between me and thee, old man, the case stands quite otherwise. We have nothing to reproach each other with. And now suffer me to sing a song to you on the lute."

He stretched out his hand, and took down from the wall an old worn-out lute which was hanging there, and, having with surprising skill and rapidity put it into a state fit to be used, he struck some chords, and the low melancholy tones of the instrument seemed well adapted to the words he began to sing:

"The flow'ret was mine own, mine own,
But I have lost its fragrance rare,
And knightly name and freedom fair,
Through sin, through sin alone.

"The flow'ret was thine own, thine own,
Why cast away what thou didst win?
Thou knight no more, but slave of sin,
Thou'rt fearfully alone!"

"Have a care!" shouted he at the close in a pealing voice, as he pulled the strings with such tremendous force that they all broke, and a cloud of dust rose from the instrument, which spread round him like a mist. Sintram had been watching him narrowly while he was singing, and more and more did he feel convinced that it was impossible that this man and his fellow-traveller of the morning could be one and the same person. Every doubt was removed when the stranger again looked round at him with the same timid, anxious air, and with many excuses and low reverences replaced the lute in its former position, and then ran out of the hall as if bewildered with terror,

his manner forming a strange contrast with the proud and stately deportment which he had assumed toward Biorn.

The eyes of the boy were now directed to his father, and he perceived that he had sunk back senseless in his seat, as though he had been struck by a sudden blow. Sintram's cries summoned Rolf and other attendants, but it was only by their united exertions that they succeeded in restoring their lord to animation; his looks were still wild and disordered, but he suffered himself to be taken to rest without making any opposition.

V

A LONG illness followed this sudden attack, and during the course of it the stout old knight, in the midst of his delirious ravings, did not cease to affirm confidently that he must and should recover at last. He would laugh proudly when his fever fits came on, and rebuke them for daring to attack him so needlessly. Then he would murmur to himself: "That was not the right one yet; there must still be another one out in the cold mountains."

At such expressions Sintram involuntarily shuddered; they seemed to confirm his idea that the being who had ridden with him and he who had sat at table in the castle were two quite distinct persons: and he knew not why, but this thought was inexpressibly awful to him.

Biorn recovered, and appeared to have entirely forgotten his adventure with the palmer. He hunted in the mountains, he carried on his usual wild warfare with his neighbours, and Sintram became his almost constant companion; whereby each year the youth acquired a fearful increase of strength of body, with an equal fierceness of

spirit. Every one trembled at the sight of his sharp pallid features, his dark rolling eyes, his tall, muscular, and somewhat lean form; and yet no one hated him, not even those whom he distressed or injured to gratify his wildest humours. This might arise in part out of regard to old Rolf, who seldom left him long, and who always held a softening influence over him; but also many of those who had known the Lady Verena before she retired from the world affirmed that a faint reflection of the heavenly expression which had lighted up her features could often be traced in those of her son, however unlike they might be in form, and that by this their hearts were won.

Once, at the beginning of spring, Biorn and his son were hunting in the neighbourhood of the sea-coast, over a tract of country which did not belong to them; drawn thither less by the love of sport than by the wish of bidding defiance to a chieftain whom they detested, and thus exciting a feud. At that season of the year, when his winter dreams had just passed off, Sintram was always unusually fierce, and disposed for warlike adventures—and this day he was enraged at the chieftain for not coming forth from his castle to attack the intruders with armed force, and he cursed the cowardly patience and love of peace which kept his enemy thus quiet. Just then one of his wild companions rushed toward him, shouting joyfully:

“Be content, my dear young lord! I will wager that all is coming about as we and you wish; for as I was pursuing a wounded deer down to the sea-shore, I perceived a sail in sight, and a vessel filled with armed men making for the shore. Doubtless your enemy is intending to take you by surprise by coming in this way.”

Sintram, full of joy at the news, called his followers together as secretly as possible, being resolved this time

to take on himself alone the whole direction of the engagement that was likely to follow; and then to rejoin his father, and astonish him with the sight of captured foes and other tokens of victory.

The hunters, thoroughly acquainted with every cliff and rock, concealed themselves near the landing-place, and soon the strange vessel was seen approaching nearer and nearer, till at length it came to anchor, and its crew began to debark in unsuspecting security. At the head of them appeared a knight of high degree, in polished steel armour richly inlaid with gold. His head was bare, for he carried his golden helmet in his left hand, and as he looked around him with the air of one accustomed to command, none could fail to admire his noble countenance shaded by dark-brown locks, and animated by the bright smile that played around his well-shaped mouth.

A feeling came across Sintram that he must have seen this knight somewhere in bygone times, and he stood motionless for a few moments. But suddenly he raised his hand, to make the signal of attack. In vain did the good Rolf, who had just succeeded in getting up to him, whisper in his ear that these could not be the foes whom he had taken them for, but that they were entire strangers, and evidently of no mean race.

"Let them be who they may," replied the wild youth, "they have been the cause of my coming here, and they shall pay dearly for having so deceived me. Say not another word if you value your life!"

And immediately he gave the signal; a thick shower of javelins followed, and the Norwegian warriors rushed forth with flashing swords. They soon found that they had to do with adversaries as brave as or braver than they could have desired. More fell on the side of these who made than of those who received the assault, and the

strangers appeared to have a surprising knowledge of the mode of fighting which belonged to those northern regions. The knight clad in steel armour had not had time to put on his helmet, but it seemed as if he in nowise needed such protection, for his good sword afforded him sufficient defence even against the spears and darts which were incessantly hurled at him, as with rapid skill he received them on the shining blade, and dashed them far away shivered into fragments.

At the first onset Sintram could not penetrate to the place where this valiant chief was standing, as all his followers, eager for such a noble prey, thronged closely round him; but now the way was cleared enough for him to spring toward the brave stranger, shouting a war-cry, and brandishing his sword above his head.

"Gabrielle!" cried the knight, as he dexterously parried the heavy blow which was descending, and with one powerful sword-thrust he laid his youthful antagonist prostrate on the ground; then, placing his knee on Sintram's breast, he drew forth a dagger and held it at his throat. The men-at-arms ranged themselves around. Sintram felt that no hope remained for him. He determined to die as became a bold warrior, and without giving one sign of emotion he looked on the fatal weapon with a steady gaze.

As he lay with his eyes cast upward, he fancied that he saw an apparition of a lovely female form in a bright attire of blue and gold. "Our ancestors told truly of the Valkyrias," murmured he. "Strike, then, thou unknown conqueror."

But with this the knight did not comply, neither was it a Valkyria who had so suddenly appeared, but the beautiful wife of the stranger, who, having advanced to the edge of the vessel, had thus met the upraised look of Sintram.

"Folko," cried she, in the softest tone, "thou knight

without reproach! I know that thou wilt spare a vanquished foe."

The knight sprang up, and with courtly grace assisted the youth to rise, saying: "You owe your life and liberty to the noble lady of Montfauçon. But if you are so far lost to all sense of honour as to wish to resume the combat, here am I—let it be yours to begin."

Sintram sank on his knees, overwhelmed with shame and remorse; for he had often heard of the high renown of the French knight Folko of Montfauçon, who was distantly allied to his father's house, and of the grace and beauty of his gentle lady Gabrielle.

VI

THE Lord of Montfauçon looked with astonishment at his strange adversary; and as he gazed on him recollections arose in his mind of that northern race from whom he was descended, and with whom he had always maintained friendly relations. His eye fell on a golden bear's claw, with which Sintram's cloak was fastened, and the sight of that made all clear to him.

"Have you not," said he, "a valiant and far-famed kinsman called the Sea-king Arinbiorn, whose helmet is adorned with golden vulture wings? And is not your father the knight Biorn? For surely the bear's claw on your mantle must be the cognizance of your house."

Sintram gave a sign of assent, but his deep sense of shame and humiliation did not allow him to speak.

The knight of Montfauçon raised him from the ground, and said gravely, yet gently: "We are then of kin the one to the other; but I could never have believed that any

one of your noble house would attack a peaceful man without provocation, nay, even lie in wait to surprise him."

"Slay me at once," answered Sintram, "if indeed I am worthy to die by the hand of so renowned a knight. I can no longer endure the light of day."

"Because you have been overcome?" asked Montfauçon. Sintram shook his head. "Or is it rather because you have committed an unknighly action?"

The glow of shame that overspread the youth's countenance answered this question.

"But you should not on that account wish to die," resumed Montfauçon. "You should rather wish to live, that you may prove your repentance and make your name illustrious by many noble deeds. For you are endowed with a bold spirit and with strength of limb, and also with the quick eye of one fitted to command. I should have made you a knight this very hour if you had borne yourself as bravely in a good cause as you have just now done in a most unworthy one. See to it that there may not be much delay in your receiving that high honour. I trust to your fulfilling the promise of good which is discernible in you."

A joyous sound of music interrupted his discourse. The Lady Gabrielle, bright as the morning, had come down from the ship, surrounded by her maidens, and, having been informed by Folko in a few words who his late adversary was, she spoke of the combat as if it had only been a fair and honourable passage of arms, saying:

"You must not be cast down, noble youth, because my wedded lord has won the prize, for be it known to you that in the whole world there is but one knight who can boast of not having been overcome by the Baron of Montfauçon. And who can say," continued she sportively, "whether even that would have happened had he not set

himself to win back the magic ring from me, from me his lady-love, destined to him as well by the choice of my own heart as by the will of Heaven? "

Folko bent his head smiling over the snow-white hand of his lady, and then desired the youth to conduct them to his father's castle. Rolf undertook to superintend the debarking of the horses and valuables of the strangers, filled with joy at the thought that an angel in woman's form had appeared to exercise a softening influence over his beloved young master, and perhaps even to free him from that curse under which he had suffered so long.

Sintram had sent messengers all round to seek for his father, and to announce to him the arrival of his noble guests. They therefore found the old knight in his castle, with everything prepared for their reception. Gabrielle could not enter the vast, dark-looking building without a slight shudder, which was increased when she saw the rolling fiery eyes of its lord; even the pale, dark-haired Sintram seemed to her to assume a more fearful appearance, and she sighed to herself: " Oh, what an awful abode have you brought me to visit, my own true knight! Oh, that we were once again in my sunny Gascony, or in your knightly Normandy! "

But the grave yet courteous reception they met with, the deep respect paid to her grace and beauty, and to the high fame of Folko, helped to reassure her; and ere long her buoyant spirit took pleasure in observing all the novelties by which she was surrounded. And, besides, it could only be for a passing moment that any womanly fears found a place in her breast when her lord was near at hand; for well did she know what effectual protection that brave baron was ever ready to afford to all who were near to him or any way committed to his charge.

Soon afterward Rolf passed through the great hall in

which Biorn and his guests were seated, conducting their attendants, who had charge of the baggage, to the apartments allotted to strangers; and Gabrielle, catching sight of her favourite lute, desired it might be brought to her, in order that she might see if the precious instrument had suffered any damage. As she bent over it with earnest attention, and her taper fingers ran up and down the strings, a smile, bright as the summer's dawn, lighted up the countenances of Biorn and his son, and both said with an involuntary sigh:

"Ah, if you would but play on that lute, and sing to it! It would be too enchanting!"

The lady looked up at them, well pleased, and, smiling her assent, she began this song:

"Songs and flowers are returning
And radiant skies of May,
Earth her choicest gifts is yielding,
But one is past away.

"The spring that clothes with tenderest green,
Each grove and sunny plain,
Shines not for my forsaken heart,
Brings not my joys again.

"Warble not so, thou nightingale,
Upon thy blooming spray,
Thy sweetness now will burst my heart,
I can not bear thy lay.

"For flowers and birds are come again,
And breezes mild of May,
But treasured hopes and golden hours
Are lost to me for aye!"

The two Norwegians sat plunged in melancholy thought; but gradually Sintram's eyes began to brighten with a milder expression, his cheeks glowed, and every feature relaxed, till those who looked at him could have fancied they saw a glorified spirit. The good Rolf, who

had stood listening to the song, rejoiced from his heart as he gazed at him, and devoutly raised his hands in gratitude to heaven. But Gabrielle's astonishment did not suffer her to take her eyes off Sintram. At last she said to him:

"I should much like to know what it is that has so struck you in that little song. It is merely a simple lay of the spring, full of the images which that sweet season never fails to call up in the minds of my countrymen."

"But is your home really so lovely, so wondrously full of poetry and its delights?" cried the enraptured Sintram. "Then I am no longer surprised at your heavenly beauty, at the empire you have already gained over my hard, wayward heart! For from such a paradise angelic messengers would surely be sent to comfort and enlighten the dark, desolate world without." And so saying, he fell on his knees before the lady in an attitude of deep humility.

Folko looked on all the while with an approving smile, while Gabrielle, in much embarrassment, seemed hardly to know how she should treat the half-wild yet courteous young stranger. After a little hesitation, however, she extended her fair hand to him, and said as she gently raised him:

"Any one who listens with such delight to music must surely know how to awaken its strains himself. Take my lute, and let us hear one of your spirit-stirring songs."

But Sintram drew back, and would not take the instrument, and he said:

"Heaven forbid that my rough, untutored hand should touch those delicate strings! For even were I to begin with some soft strains, yet before long the wild spirit which dwells in me would break out, and the beautiful instrument would assuredly be injured or destroyed. No, no, suffer me rather to fetch my own huge harp, strung with

bears' sinews set in brass, for in truth I do feel myself inspired to play and sing."

Gabrielle murmured a half-frightened assent, and Sintram, having brought his harp, began to strike it loudly, and to sing these words with a voice no less powerful:

" ' Sir Knight, Sir Knight, oh, whither away
With thy snow-white sail on the foaming spray? '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for the land of flowers!

" ' Too long have I trod upon ice and snow,
I seek the bowers where roses blow. '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for the land of flowers!

" ' He steered on his course by night and day
Till he cast his anchor in Naples Bay.
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' There wandered a lady upon the strand,
Her fair hair bound with a golden band.
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' Hail to thee! hail to thee! lady bright,
Mine own shalt thou be ere morning light. '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' Not so, Sir Knight,' the lady replied,
' For you speak to the margrave's chosen bride. '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' Your lover may come with his shield and spear,
And the victor shall win thee, lady dear! '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' Nay, seek for another bride, I pray,
Most fair are the maidens of Naples Bay. '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' No, lady, for thee my heart doth burn,
And the world can not now my purpose turn. '
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

" ' Then came the young margrave, bold and brave,
But low was he laid in a grassy grave.
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"And then the fierce Northman joyous cried,
'Now shall I possess lands, castle, and bride!'
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!"

Sintram's song was ended, but his eyes glared wildly, and the vibrations of the harp-strings still resounded in a marvellous manner. Biorn's attitude was again erect, he stroked his long beard and rattled his sword as if in great delight at what he had just heard. The wild song and the strange aspect of the father and son made Gabrielle tremble more than ever, but a glance toward the Lord of Mont-fauçon again quieted her fears, for there he sat with a calm smile on his lips, as composed in the midst of all the noise as if it had only been caused by a passing autumnal storm.

VII

SOME weeks had passed since this when one day, as the shadows of evening were beginning to fall, Sintram entered the garden of the castle in a very disturbed state of mind. Although the presence of Gabrielle never failed to soothe and calm him, yet if she left the apartment for even a few moments the fearful wildness of his spirit seemed to return with renewed strength. On this occasion, after reading legends of the olden times to his father Biorn during a great part of the day, she had retired to her own chamber. The sweet tones of her lute could be distinctly heard in the garden below, but the sounds only drove the agitated youth farther and farther into the deep shades of the ancient trees that surrounded the garden. Stooping suddenly to avoid some overhanging branches, he started at finding himself close to something which he had not perceived before, and which at first sight he took

for a small bear standing on its hind legs, with a wonderfully long and crooked horn on its head. He drew back in surprise and fear as a shrill voice addressed these words to him:

"Well, my brave young knight, whence do you come? whither are you going? and wherefore are you so terrified?"

And then he became aware that what he saw was a little old man so wrapped up in a rough garment of fur that scarcely one of his features was visible, and wearing in his cap a strange-looking long feather.

"But whence do you come? and whither are you going?" returned the angry Sintram. "For you are the person to whom such questions should be addressed. What business have you in our domains, you hideous little being?"

"Well, well," sneered the other one, "I am thinking that I am quite big enough as I am. And as to the rest, why should you object to my being here hunting for snails? Snails can not surely be included in the game which your high mightinesses consider that you alone have a right to pursue? Now it happens that I know how to prepare from them an excellent high-flavoured beverage; and I have taken a sufficient number for to-day: marvellous fat little animals, with wise faces like a man's, and long twisted horns on their heads. Would you like to see them? Look here!"

And then he began to unfasten and fumble about his fur garment, till Sintram, filled with disgust and horror, said: "Pshaw! I detest such animals! Be quiet, and tell me at once who and what you yourself are."

"Are you so bent upon knowing my name?" replied the little man. "Let it content you to hear that I am Master of all secret knowledge, and well versed in the most

intricate depths of ancient history. Ah! my young sir, if you would only hear some of the things I have to tell! But you are too much afraid!"

"Afraid of you!" cried Sintram, with a wild laugh.

"Many a better man than you has been so before now," muttered the Little Master; "but they did not like being told of it any more than you do."

"To prove that you are mistaken," said Sintram, "I will remain here with you till the moon has risen high in the heavens. But you must relate to me one of your stories the while."

The little man nodded his head with a look of much satisfaction, and as they paced together up and down a retired walk shaded by lofty elm-trees he began:

"Many hundred years ago a young knight called Paris of Troy lived in that sunny land of the south where are found the sweetest songs, the brightest flowers, and the most beautiful ladies. You know a song that tells of that fair land, do you not, young sir? 'Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers.'"

Sintram gave a sign of assent, and sighed deeply.

"Now," resumed the Little Master, "it happened that Paris led that kind of life which is not uncommon in those countries, and of which their poets often sing. He would pass whole months together in the garb of a peasant, making the woods and mountains resound to the tones of his lute, and watching the flocks that he led to pasture. Here one day three beautiful goddesses appeared to him, who were disputing about a golden apple—and they appealed to him to decide which of them was the most beautiful, as to her the golden prize was to be adjudged. The first had power to give thrones and sceptres and crowns to whom she would; the second could give wisdom and knowledge; and the third knew how to prepare love-

charms which could not fail of securing the affections of the fairest of women. Each one in turn proffered her choicest gifts to the young shepherd, in order that, tempted by them, he might give the prize to her. But as beauty charmed him more than anything else in the world, he decided that the third goddess should win the golden apple—her name was Venus. The two others departed in great displeasure, but Venus bade him put on his knightly armour, and his helmet adorned with waving feathers, and then she conducted him to a famous city called Sparta, where ruled the noble King Menelaus. His young wife Helen was the loveliest woman on earth, and the goddess offered her to Paris in return for the golden apple. He was most ready to have her, and wished for nothing better; but he asked how he was to gain possession of her.”

“Paris can have been but a sorry knight,” interrupted Sintram. “Such things are easily settled. The husband is challenged to a single combat, and he that is victorious carries off the wife.”

“But King Menelaus was exercising hospitality toward the young knight,” said the narrator.

“Listen to me, Little Master,” cried Sintram. “He might have asked the goddess for some other beautiful woman, and then have mounted his horse, or weighed anchor, and departed in search of her.”

“Yes, yes, it is very easy to say so,” replied the old man. “But if you only knew how bewitchingly lovely this Queen Helen was! After seeing her, no admiration was left for any one else.”

And then he began a glowing description of the charms of this wondrously beautiful princess, giving to her every one of Gabrielle’s features with such exactness that Sintram, overcome with emotion, was obliged to lean against a tree to support himself.

The Little Master stood opposite to him, grinning, and he asked, "Well, now, could you have advised that poor knight Paris to fly from her?"

"Tell me at once what happened next," stammered Sintram.

"The goddess acted honourably toward Paris," continued the old man. "She declared to him that if he would carry away the lovely princess to his own city Troy he might do so, and thus cause the ruin of his whole house and of his country; but that during ten years he would be able to defend Troy against his enemies and live happy in the love of his fair lady."

"And he took her on those terms, unless he was a fool!" cried the youth.

"To be sure he accepted them," whispered the Little Master. "I would have done so in his place! And do you know, young sir, it once fell out that the appearance of things was exactly like what we now see. The newly risen moon, partly veiled by clouds, was shining dimly through the thick branches of the trees in the silence of the evening. Leaning against a tree, as you are now doing, stood the young enamoured knight Paris, and at his side the enchantress Venus, but so disguised and transformed that she did not look much more attractive than I do. And by the silvery light of the moon the form of the beautiful beloved one was seen sweeping by amid the whispering boughs."

He was silent, and, as if to realize his deluding words, Gabrielle just then appeared, musing as she walked alone down the alley of elms.

"Awful being, by what name shall I call you? What is it that you would drive me to?" muttered the trembling Sintram.

"Do you not remember your father's strong fortress.



on the Rocks of the Moon?" replied the old man. "The castellan and the garrison are devoted to you. It could well stand a ten years' siege, and the postern gate which leads to it is open, as was that of the royal citadel of Sparta for the happy Paris."

The youth looked, and perceived, in fact, that a gate in the garden wall, which was usually closed, had been left open, and that the distant mountains lighted up by the moon might be clearly seen through it.

"And if he did not accept, he was a fool," said the Little Master with a grin, echoing Sintram's former words.

At that moment Gabrielle drew near to him. She was within reach of his grasp had he made the least movement, and the moon as it shone on her heavenly countenance gave new charms to it. The youth had already bent forward.

"My Lord and God, I pray
Turn from his heart away
This world's turmoil.
And call him to thy light,
Be it through sorrow's night,
Through pain or toil."

These words were sung by old Rolf at that very time as he lingered on the banks of the lake by the castle, seeking in the fervent supplications he addressed to the Almighty a relief to his anxious thoughts concerning Sintram. The sounds reached Sintram's ear; he stood as if spellbound, and made the sign of the cross. Immediately the Little Master fled away, jumping uncouthly on one leg through the gates and shutting them after him with a loud noise. Sintram approached the terrified Gabrielle, and said, as he offered his arm to support her:

"Suffer me to lead you back to the castle. The nights in these northern regions are often wild and fearful."

VIII

THEY found the two knights within sitting together after their evening repast. Folko was relating stories in his usual mild and cheerful manner, and Biorn was listening with a moody air, but yet as if against his will the dark cloud might pass away under the influence of his companion's bright and gentle courtesy. Gabrielle saluted the baron with a smile, and signed to him to continue his discourse as she took her place next to Biorn, with the watchful kindness which ever marked her bearing toward him. Sintram the while stood by the hearth, abstracted and melancholy, and the embers, as he stirred them, cast an unnatural gleam over his pallid features.

"And of all the German trading towns," continued Montfauçon, "the largest and richest is Hamburg. In Normandy the merchants of this city are always received with a hearty welcome, and those excellent people never fail to prove themselves our friends when we seek their advice and assistance. When I first visited Hamburg, every honour and respect was paid to me. I found its inhabitants engaged in a war with a neighbouring prince, and immediately I devoted my sword to their service, and not without success."

"Your sword! your knightly sword!" interrupted Biorn, and more than the wonted fire flashed from his eyes. "You turned it against a knight, and in behalf of shopkeepers!"

"Sir Knight," replied Folko calmly, "the barons of Montfauçon have ever been used to take the side which they esteemed the right one in combats, without consulting indifferent bystanders; and as I have received this good custom from my forefathers, so do I wish to hand it on to my remotest descendants. If you do not esteem this a

wise practice, you are at liberty to speak your opinion freely. But I can not suffer you to say anything against the people of Hamburg after I have declared them to be my friends and allies."

Biorn cast down his fierce eyes to the ground, and their wild expression seemed to fade away. He said in a subdued tone: "Proceed, noble baron. You are right, and I am wrong." Then Folko stretched out his hand to him across the table, and resumed his narration:

"Among all my beloved Hamburgers the dearest to me are two very remarkable men—a father and son. What have they not seen and done in the remotest corners of the earth! and how has every talent been devoted to the good of their native town! My life, by the blessing of God, has not been unfruitful in deeds of renown, but in comparison with the wise Gotthard Lenz and his stout-hearted son Rudlieb I look upon myself as nothing but an esquire who has perhaps some few times attended knights to tourneys, and besides that has never gone out of his own forests. They have carried the light of religion, and with it happiness and peace, to savage nations whose very names are unknown to me; and the wealth which they have brought back from those distant climes has all been given to promote the common welfare as unhesitatingly as if no other use could possibly be devised for it. On their return from their long and perilous sea voyages, they hasten to a hospital which has been founded by them and of which they undertake the entire charge. Then they proceed to select the most fitting spots whereon to erect new towers and fortresses for the defence of their beloved country. Next they repair to the houses where strangers and travellers receive hospitality at their cost. And then they return to their own abode, where guests are entertained with a splendour worthy of a king's palace,

and yet with the unassuming simplicity of manners which is thought only to belong to the shepherd's cot. Many a tale of their wondrous adventures serves to enliven these sumptuous feasts. Among others, I remember to have heard my friends relate one at the thought of which I still shudder. Possibly I may gain some more complete information on the subject from you. It appears that several years ago, just about the time of the Christmas festival, Gotthard and Rudlieb were shipwrecked on the coast of Norway during a violent winter's tempest. They never could ascertain exactly the situation of the rocks on which their vessel stranded; but so much is certain that very near the sea-shore stood a huge castle, to which the father and son betook themselves, seeking for that assistance and shelter which Christian people are ever willing to afford each other in case of need. They went alone, leaving their followers to watch the ship. The castle gates were thrown open, and they thought all was well. But on a sudden the courtyard was filled with armed men, who with one accord aimed their sharp iron-pointed spears at the defenceless strangers, whose dignified remonstrances and mild entreaties were only heard in sullen silence or with scornful jeerings. After a while a knight came down the stairs, his eyes, so to speak, flashing fire, and they hardly knew whether to think they saw some fearful apparition or a wild heathen. He gave a signal, and the fatal spears closed round them. At that instant the soft tones of a woman's voice fell on their ear; she was calling on the Saviour's holy name for aid. At the sound the wild figures in the courtyard rushed madly one against the other, the gates burst open, and Gotthard and Rudlieb flew away, catching a glimpse as they went of an angelic face which appeared at a window of the castle. They made every exertion to get their ship again afloat, preferring to trust them-

selves to the treacherous sea rather than to remain on that barbarous coast, and at last they landed in Denmark, after encountering many perils and dangers. They have always said that it must have been a heathen's castle in which they were so cruelly treated; but I am rather disposed to think it was some ruined fortress, long deserted by men, in which evil spirits were wont to hold their nightly assemblies, for is it possible to imagine that even a heathen could be found with so much of a demon's temper as to meet strangers asking for hospitality with deadly weapons, instead of the refreshment and shelter they needed?"

Biorn gazed fixedly on the ground, as though he were turned into stone; but Sintram came toward the table, and said:

"Father, let us seek out this wicked abode, and let us level it to the ground. I can not tell how, but I feel quite sure that the accursed deed we have just heard of is alone the cause of my frightful dreams."

Enraged at his son's words, Biorn rose, and would perhaps again have uttered some dreadful imprecation; but Heaven decreed otherwise, for just at that moment the pealing notes of a trumpet were heard, which drowned the angry tones of his voice, the great doors opened slowly, and a herald entered the hall. He bowed reverently, and then said:

"I am sent by Jarl Eric the aged. He returned two days ago from his expedition to the Grecian seas. His wish had been to take vengeance on the island which is called Chios, where fifty years ago his father was slain by the soldiers of the emperor. But your kinsman, the sea-king Arinbiorn, who was lying there at anchor, tried to pacify him and to turn him from his purpose. To this Jarl Eric would not listen; so the sea-king said next that he would never suffer Chios to be laid waste, because it was

an island where the lays of an old Greek bard, called Homer, were excellently sung, and where, moreover, a very choice wine was made. Words proving of no avail, a combat ensued, in which Arinbiorn had so much the advantage that Jarl Eric lost two of his ships, and only with difficulty escaped in one which had sustained great damage. Eric the aged has now resolved to take revenge on some of the sea-king's race, since Arinbiorn himself is rarely to be found. Will you, Biorn of the Fiery Eyes, at once pay as large a penalty in cattle and goods of whatever description as it may please the Jarl to demand? Or will you prepare to meet him with an armed force at Niflung's Heath seven days hence?"

Biorn bowed his head quietly, and replied in a mild tone, "Seven days hence at Niflung's Heath." He then offered to the herald a golden goblet full of rich wine, and added, "Drink that, and then carry off with thee the cup which thou hast emptied."

"The Baron of Montfauçon likewise sends greeting to thy chieftain Jarl Eric," interposed Folko, "and engages to be also at Niflung's Heath, as the hereditary friend of the sea-king's house, and also as being the kinsman and guest of Biorn of the Fiery Eyes."

The herald was seen to tremble at the name of Montfauçon; he bowed very low, cast an anxious, reverential look at the baron, and left the hall.

Gabrielle looked on her knight with a smile that spoke of entire trust in his valour when she heard him pledge himself to appear in the field, and she only asked, "Where shall I remain while you go forth to battle, Folko?"

"I had hoped," answered Biorn, "that you would be well contented to stay in this castle, lovely lady; I leave my son to guard you and attend on you."

Gabrielle hesitated an instant, and Sintram, who had

resumed his position near the fire, muttered to himself as he fixed his eyes on the bright flames which were flashing up: "Yes, yes, so it will probably happen. I can fancy that King Menelaus had just left Sparta on some warlike expedition when the young knight Paris met the lovely Helen that evening in the garden." But Gabrielle, shuddering, although she knew not why, said quickly:

"Remain here without you, Folko? And how could I bear to forego the joy of seeing you win fresh laurels? or the honour of tending you, should you chance to receive a wound?"

Folko bent his head in acknowledgment of his lady's anxious tenderness, and replied: "Come with your own true knight, since such is your pleasure, and be to him a bright guiding star. It is a good old northern custom that ladies should be present at knightly combats, and no true warrior of the north will fail to respect the place whence beams the light of their eyes. Unless indeed," continued he, with an inquiring look at Biorn, "unless Jarl Eric has degenerated from his valiant forefathers?"

"His honour may be relied on," said Biorn confidently.

"Then array yourself, my fairest love," said the delighted Folko, "array yourself, and come forth with us to the battlefield, to behold and judge our knightly deeds."

"Come forth with us to the battlefield," echoed Sintram in a sudden transport of joy.

And they all dispersed, Sintram betaking himself again to the wood, while the others retired to rest.

IX

It was a wild, dreary tract of country that bore the name of Niflung's Heath. According to tradition, the young Niflung, son of Hogni, the last of his race, had there ended in sadness and obscurity a life which no warlike deeds had rendered illustrious. Many ancient monuments of the dead were standing round about, and in the few oak-trees scattered here and there over the plain huge eagles had built their nests; the beating of their heavy wings as they fought together, and their wild screams, were heard far off in regions more thickly peopled by man, and at the sound children would tremble in their cradles and old men quake with fear as they sat over the blazing hearth.

As the seventh night, the last before the day of combat, was just beginning, two large armies were seen descending from the hills in opposite directions: that which came from the west was commanded by Eric the aged, that from the east by Biorn of the Fiery Eyes. They appeared thus early in compliance with the custom which required that adversaries should always present themselves at the appointed field of battle before the time named, in order to prove that they rather sought than dreaded the hour of trial. Folko immediately chose out the most convenient spot for the tent of blue and gold to be pitched, which was to shelter his gentle lady; while Sintram, in the character of herald, rode over to Jarl Eric to announce to him that the beauteous Gabrielle of Montfauçon was there guarded by his father's warriors, and would the next morning be present as a judge of the combat.

Jarl Eric bowed low on receiving this intelligence, and ordered his bards to strike up a lay, the words of which ran as follows:

"Warriors bold of Eric's band,
Gird your glittering armour on,
Stand beneath to-morrow's sun,
In your might.

"Fairest dame that ever gladdened
Our wild shores with beauty's vision,
May thy bright eyes o'er our combat,
Judge the right.

"Tidings of yon noble stranger
Long ago have reached our ears,
Wafted upon southern breezes,
O'er the wave.

"Now midst yonder hostile ranks,
In his warlike pride he meets us,
Folko comes! Fight, men of Eric,
True and brave!"

These wondrous tones floated over the plain, and reached the tent of Gabrielle. It was no new thing to hear her knight's fame celebrated on all sides, but now that she listened to his praises bursting forth in the stillness of night from the mouth of his enemies, she could scarcely refrain from kneeling at the feet of the mighty chieftain. But he with courteous tenderness prevented her from sinking into that lowly posture, and, pressing his lips fervently on her snow-white hand, he said, "My deeds, O lovely lady, belong to thee, and not to me!"

No sooner had the darkness of night passed away, and the red streaks in the east announced the arrival of the appointed morning, than the whole plain seemed alive with preparations for the combat: knights put on their rattling armour, war-horses began to neigh impatiently, the morning draught went round in gold and silver goblets, while war-songs and the harps of the bards resounded far and near. A joyous march was heard in Biorn's camp as Montfauçon, with his troops and retainers, all clad in bright steel armour, conducted their lady up to a neighbouring

hill, where she would be safe from the spears which would soon be flying in all directions, and whence she could command a complete view of the battlefield. The morning sun lighted up her lovely features, adding radiance to her surpassing beauty, and as she came in view of the camp of Jarl Eric his soldiers lowered their weapons, while the chieftains bent their proud heads, which were covered with huge helmets. Two of Montfauçon's pages remained in attendance on the Lady Gabrielle, well content to exchange their hopes of gaining renown in the battlefield for the far greater honour of being chosen to fulfil this office. Both armies passed in front of her, saluting her as they went; they then placed themselves in array, and the fight began.

The spears flew from the hands of the stout northern warriors, rattling against the broad shields under which they sheltered themselves, or sometimes clattering as they met in the air. At intervals, on one side or the other, a man was struck, and fell bathed in his blood. After a short pause the knight of Montfauçon advanced with his troop of Norman horsemen. Even as he dashed past he did not fail to lower his shining sword to salute Gabrielle, and then, with a loud exulting war-cry, which burst from the lips of all, they charged the left wing of the enemy. Eric's foot soldiers, kneeling firmly in close ranks, received them with fixed javelins. Many a noble horse fell wounded to death, and in falling brought his rider with him to the ground; others again crushed their foes under them as they writhed in mortal agonies. In the midst of the confusion and bloodshed Folko and his war-steed escaped unhurt, and, followed by a small band of chosen men, he dashed through the hostile ranks. Already were they falling into disorder, already were Biorn's warriors giving shouts of victory, when a troop of horse, headed by Jarl

Eric himself, advanced against the valiant Baron of Mont-fauçon; and while his Normans, hastily assembling round their leader, assisted him in repelling this unexpected attack, the enemy's infantry were gradually forming themselves into a thick impenetrable mass, which rolled on in formidable strength. All these movements appeared to be directed by a warrior in the centre, whose loud, piercing shout was heard at every instant. And scarcely were the troops formed into this close array when suddenly they spread themselves out on all sides, carrying everything before them with the irresistible force of the burning torrent from a volcano.

Biorn's soldiers, who had thought themselves on the point of inclosing their enemies, gave way at once before this wondrous onset. The knight himself in vain attempted to stem the tide of fugitives, and with difficulty escaped being carried away by it.

Sintram stood looking on this scene of confusion with mute indignation; friends and foes passed by him, all equally avoiding him, and dreading to come in contact with one whose aspect was so fearful, nay, almost unearthly, in his motionless rage. He aimed no blow either to right or left; his powerful battle-axe hung idly at his side. But his eye flashed fire, and seemed to be piercing the enemy's ranks through and through in the endeavour to find out who it was that had conjured up this sudden warlike spirit. At length he discovered the object of his search. A small man clothed in strange-looking armour, with large golden horns on his helmet, and a long visor, advancing in front of it, was leaning on a two-edged curved spear, and seemed to be looking with derision at the hasty flight of Biorn's troops as they were pursued by their victorious foes.

"That is he," cried Sintram—"he who would bring me to disgrace before the eyes of Gabrielle!" And with the

swiftness of an arrow he flew toward him, uttering a wild shout of defiance. The combat was fierce, but not of long duration. To the wondrous dexterity of his adversary Sintram opposed his far superior strength and height, and he dealt such a tremendous blow on the horned helmet that a stream of blood rushed forth, the small man fell as if stunned, and after some frightful convulsive movements his limbs appeared to stiffen in death.

His overthrow gave the signal for that of all Eric's army. Even those who had not seen him fall suddenly lost their courage, and again retreated in confusion, or ran in wild affright on the very spears of their enemies. At the same time Montfauçon was dispersing Jarl Eric's cavalry after a desperate conflict, and had taken their chief prisoner with his own hand. Biorn of the Fiery Eyes stood victorious in the middle of the field of battle. The day was won.

X

IN full view of both armies, with glowing cheeks and looks of modest humility, Sintram was conducted by the brave Baron of Montfauçon up the hill where Gabrielle stood in all the lustre of her beauty. Both warriors bent the knee before her, and Folko said with much solemnity: "Lady, this valiant youth of a noble race has borne away the palm of victory to-day. I pray you to let him receive from your fair hand the reward to which he is so justly entitled."

Gabrielle bowed courteously, took off her scarf of blue and gold, and fastened to it a bright sword which a page brought to her on a cushion of cloth of silver. She then with a smile presented her precious gift to Sintram, who

was bending forward to receive it, when suddenly Gabrielle drew back, and, turning to Folko, she said:

"Noble baron, should not he on whom I bestow a scarf and sword be first admitted into the order of knight-hood?"

Folko sprang up, and, bowing low before his lady, gave the youth the accolade with solemn earnestness. Then Gabrielle buckled on his sword, saying:

"Take this for the honour of God and the service of noble ladies, young knight. I saw you fight, I saw you conquer, and my fervent prayers were offered up for you. Fight and conquer often again as you have done this day, that the fame of your deeds may be wafted even to my far-distant country." And at a sign from Folko she offered her cheek for the new knight to kiss.

Thrilling all over, and full of a holy joy, Sintram arose in deep silence, and tears streamed down his cheeks, while the shout of the assembled troops greeted the enraptured youth with stunning applause. Old Rolf stood silently on one side, and as he saw the mild, beaming expression in his beloved pupil's countenance he calmly and piously returned thanks: "The strife is now at an end—rich blessings are showered down—the evil foe is slain."

Biorn and Jarl Eric had the while been talking together with eagerness but not with animosity. The conqueror now led his vanquished enemy up the hill, and presented him to the baron and Gabrielle, saying:

"Instead of two enemies, you now see two sworn allies, and I request you, my beloved guests and kinsfolk, to receive him graciously as one who henceforward belongs to us."

"He was ever one with you in heart," added Eric, smiling; "I have indeed sought for revenge of former wrongs, but I have now had enough of defeats both by sea and

land. Yet I thank Heaven that neither in the Grecian seas nor on Niflung's Heath have I shown myself wanting in valour."

The Lord of Montfauçon assented cordially, and the terms of peace were agreed on with entire good-will. Jarl Eric then addressed Gabrielle in so courtly a manner that she could not refrain from looking on the gigantic old warrior with a smile of astonishment, and she gave him her hand to kiss. Meanwhile Sintram was standing apart, speaking earnestly to his good Rolf, and at length he was heard to say:

"But before all be sure that you bury that wonderfully brave knight whom my battle-axe laid low. Choose out the greenest hill for his resting-place, and the loftiest oak to shade his grave. Also I wish you to open his visor and to examine his countenance carefully, lest the blow should only have deprived him of motion, not of life; and, moreover, that you may be able to give me an exact description of him to whom I owe the noblest, most precious prize ever adjudged to man."

Rolf departed to execute his orders.

"Our young knight is speaking there of one among the slain, of whom I should like to hear more," said Folko, turning to Jarl Eric. "Who was the wonderful chieftain who rallied your troops in so masterly a manner, and who at last fell under Sintram's powerful weapon?"

"You ask me more than I know how to answer," replied Jarl Eric. "About three nights ago this stranger made his appearance among us. I was sitting with my chieftains and warriors round the hearth, forging our armour, and singing the while. Suddenly, above the din of our hammering and our singing, we heard so loud a noise that it silenced us in a moment, and we sat motionless as if we had been turned into stone. The sound con-

tinued equally stunning, and at last we made out that it must be caused by some person blowing a huge horn outside the castle, in order to obtain admittance. I went down myself to the gate, and as I passed through the courtyard I perceived that all my dogs were so terrified by the extraordinary noise as to be howling and crouching in their kennels, instead of barking at the intruders. I scolded them, and called to them, but even the fiercest would not follow me. 'Then,' thought I to myself, 'I must show you the way to set to work'; so I grasped my sword firmly, I set my torch on the ground close beside me, and I let the gates fly open without further delay. For I well knew that it would be no easy matter for any one to effect an entrance against my will. A loud laugh greeted me, and I heard these words, "Well, well, what mighty preparations are these before one small man is allowed to find the shelter he seeks!" And in truth I did feel myself reddened with shame when I saw the small stranger standing opposite to me, quite alone. I called to him to come in at once, and offered my hand to him; but he still showed some displeasure, and would not give me his in return. As he went up, however, he became more friendly, he showed me the golden horn on which he sounded that blast, and which he carried screwed on his helmet, as well as another exactly like it. When he was sitting with us in the hall, he behaved in a very strange manner—sometimes he was merry, sometimes cross, by turns courteous and rude in his demeanour, without any one being able to see a motive for such constant changes. I longed to know where he came from, but how could I ask my guest such a question? He told us as much as this, that he was starved with cold in our country, and that his own was much warmer. Also he appeared well acquainted with the city of Constantinople, and related fearful stories of how

brothers, uncles, and nephews—nay, even fathers and sons—had been known there to drive each other from the throne, and to exercise such cruelties as putting out eyes and cutting out tongues when they stopped short of murdering their opponents. At length he pronounced his own name; it sounded harmonious, like a Greek name, but none of us could remember it. Before long he displayed his skill as an armourer. He understood marvellously well how to handle the red-hot iron, and how to form it into weapons of a more murderous nature than any I ever before had seen. I would not suffer him to go on making them, for I was resolved to meet you in the field with such arms only as you would yourselves bear, and as we are all used to in our northern countries. Then he laughed, and said he thought it would be quite possible to be victorious without their aid, provided address and dexterity were not wanting, and so forth; if only I would intrust the command of my infantry to him, I might depend upon success. It occurred to me that he who was so skilled in forging arms must also wield them well—yet I required some proof of his powers. Sir Knight, he came off victorious in trials of strength more surprising than any you could imagine; and although the fame of young Sintram as a bold and brave warrior is spread far and wide, yet I can scarce believe that he really succeeded in slaying such a one as my Greek ally showed himself to be.”

He would have continued speaking, but the good Rolf here made his appearance hastening toward them, followed by a few attendants, the whole party looking so ghastly pale that all eyes were involuntarily fixed on them, and every one waited anxiously to hear what tidings they brought. Rolf stood still, silent and trembling.

“Take courage, my old friend!” cried Sintram.

"Whatever you may have to tell will come forth clear and true from your honest lips."

"My dear master," began the old man, "be not angry, but as to burying that strange warrior whom you slew, it is a thing impossible. Would that we had never opened that wide, hideous visor! For so horrible a countenance grinned at us from underneath it, so distorted by death, and with such a fiendish expression that we hardly kept our senses. We could not by any possibility have touched him. I would rather be sent to kill wolves and bears in the desert, and look on while fierce birds of prey feast on their carcasses."

All present shuddered and were silent, till Sintram nerved himself to say: "Dear good old man, why use such wild words as I never till now heard you utter? But tell me, Jarl Eric, did your ally present such an awful appearance while he was yet alive?"

"I do not call it to mind," answered Jarl Eric, looking inquiringly at his companions who were standing around.

They said the same thing as their lord; but, on further questioning, it appeared that neither the chieftain, nor the knights, nor the soldiers, could say exactly what the stranger was like.

"We must then find it out for ourselves, and bury the corpse," said Sintram; and he signed to the assembled party to follow him. All did so, except the Lord of Montfauçon, whom the whispered entreaty of Gabrielle kept at her side. He lost nothing by remaining behind, for though Niflung's Heath was searched from one end to the other many times, yet the body of the unknown warrior was never again discovered.

XI

THE joy and serenity that came over Sintram's soul on this day appeared to be much more than a passing gleam. If still an occasional thought of the knight Paris and the fair Helen for a moment made his heart beat wildly, it needed but one look at his scarf and sword to restore calmness within. "What can any man wish for more than has been already bestowed on me?" would he say to himself at such times, in deep emotion. And thus it went on for a long while.

The autumn, so beautiful in those northern climes, had begun to redden the leaves of the old oaks and elms around the castle when one day it chanced that Sintram found himself seated in company with Folko and Gabrielle, in almost the very same spot in the garden where he had before met that mysterious being whom, without knowing why, he had named the Little Master. But on this day in what a different light did everything appear! The sun was sinking slowly over the sea; the mist of an autumnal evening was rising from the fields, and wreathing itself round the hill on which stood the huge castle. Gabrielle, placing her lute in Sintram's hands, said to him:

"Dear youth, I no longer fear intrusting my delicate favourite to you, now that you are become so mild and gentle. Let me again hear you sing that lay of the land of flowers, for I am sure it will now sound much sweeter than when you accompanied it with the vibrations of your fearful harp."

The young knight bowed as he prepared to obey the lady's commands. With a grace and softness hitherto strangers to him, the wild strains flowed from his lips, and appeared to lose their former character, and to change into harmony to which angels might have listened. Tears

stood in Gabrielle's eyes; and Sintram, as he gazed on the bright pearly drops, poured forth tones of still richer sweetness. When the last notes were sounded, Gabrielle's angelic voice was heard to echo them, and as she repeated—

“Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers,”

Sintram put down the lute and raised his thankful eyes toward the stars, which were now stealing out and stud-ding the whole face of the sky. Then Gabrielle, turning toward her lord, murmured these words:

“Oh, how long have we been wandering far away from our own sunny hills and bright gardens! Oh, for that land of the sweetest flowers!”

Sintram could scarce believe that he heard aright, so suddenly did he feel as if he were shut out from paradise. But his faint hopes of being mistaken were crushed by the assurance of Folko that he would endeavour to fulfil his lady's wishes with all possible speed, and that their ship was lying off the shore, ready to put to sea. She thanked him with a kiss imprinted softly on his forehead, and, leaning on his arm, she bent her steps toward the castle.

The wretched Sintram, neglected and forgotten, remained behind, motionless as if he had been turned to stone. At length, when the darkness of night had spread itself over the whole sky, he started up wildly, ran up and down the garden as if all his former madness had taken possession of him, and then rushed out and wandered on the hills in the pale moonlight. There he dashed his sword against the trees and bushes, so that all around was heard a sound of crashing and falling, the birds of night flew about him screeching in wild alarm, and the deer, startled by the noise, sprang away to take refuge in the thickest coverts.

On a sudden old Rolf appeared, returning home from a visit to the chaplain of Drontheim, to whom he had been

relating, with tears of joy, how Sintram was subdued by Gabrielle's mild influence, and how they might venture to hope that his evil dreams would never again disturb his mind. And now the sword of the furious youth had well-nigh wounded the old man in some of its fearful thrusts to right and left. He stopped short, and, clasping his hands, he said with a deep sigh:

"Alas, my beloved Sintram, my foster-child! what madness has seized you and made you thus wild and frantic?"

The youth stood a while as if spellbound; he looked in his old friend's face with a fixed and melancholy gaze, and his eyes became dim, like expiring watch-fires seen through a thick cloud of mist. At length he sighed forth these words, almost inaudibly:

"Good Rolf, good Rolf, depart from me! I have been cast out of your garden of delight; and if sometimes a light breeze blows open its golden gates so that I can look in and see the sunny spot where heavenly inhabitants wander to and fro, then immediately a cruel, cutting wind arises, which shuts the gates, and I remain without, to pass a never-ending winter in cheerless desolation."

"Beloved young knight, oh! listen to me—listen to the voice of the good spirit within you! Do you not bear in your hand that very sword which the bright lady you serve girded you with? Does not her scarf wave over your wildly beating heart? Do you not recollect how you used to say that no mortal could wish for more than had been bestowed on yourself?"

"Yes, Rolf, I have said that," replied Sintram, sinking on the mossy turf, drowned in bitter tears.

The old man wept also. Before long the youth stood again erect, his tears ceased to flow, his countenance assumed a cold, terrible expression, and he said:

"You see, Rolf, I have passed such blessed, peaceful

days, and I thought within myself that the powers of evil would never again have dominion over me. So, perchance, it might have been, just as much as daylight would always last were the sun never to go below the horizon. But ask the poor benighted earth wherefore she looks so dull and dark! Bid her again smile as she was wont to do! Old man, she can not smile; and now that the gentle, compassionate moon has disappeared behind the clouds with her sadly soothing funeral veil, she can not even weep. And in this hour of darkness all that is wild and awful wakes up into life! So do not stop me, I tell thee, do not stop me! Hurrah! I am rushing behind the pale moon!"

His voice changed to a hoarse murmur at these last words. He tore away from the trembling old man, and rushed through the forest. Rolf knelt down, and prayed and wept silently.

XII

WHERE the sea-beach was wildest, and the cliffs most steep and rugged, and close by the remains of three shattered oaks, which probably marked a place where, in darker times, human victims had been sacrificed, now stood Sintram, leaning, as if exhausted, on his drawn sword, and gazing intently on the dancing waves. The moon had again shone forth, and as her pale beams fell on his motionless figure through the quivering branches of the trees he might have been taken for some fearful idol image. Suddenly some one, hitherto unnoticed by him, half raised himself out of the withered grass, uttered a faint groan, and again lay down. This marvellous conversation then arose between the two:

"Thou that movest thyself so strangely amid the grass, dost thou belong to the living or to the dead?"

"That is as you may choose to take it. I am dead to heaven and joy—I live for hell and anguish."

"I could fancy that I had already heard thee speak."

"Oh, yes, thou surely hast."

"Art thou a troubled spirit? and was thy life-blood poured out here in ancient times?"

"I am a troubled spirit; but no man ever has, or ever can, shed my blood. I have been cast down—oh! into a frightful abyss!"

"And wert thou killed by the fall?"

"I am living now—and I shall live longer than thou."

"I could almost fancy that thou wert the crazy pilgrim with the dead men's bones hanging about him."

"I am not he, although we often consort together—and, indeed, in the most friendly manner. But to let you into a secret, he considers me to be mad. If I sometimes urge him, and say to him, 'Take!'—then he hesitates, and points upward toward the stars. And, again, if I say, 'Take not!'—then, to a certainty, he seizes on it in some awkward manner, and so he spoils my best joys and pleasures. But, in spite of all this, we remain as before, bound by a close alliance, and even by a degree of relationship."

"Give me thy hand, and let me help thee up."

"Ho, ho! my active young sir, that might bring you no good. Yet, in fact, you have already helped to raise me. Give heed to what is going on around."

The movements of Sintram's unknown companion seemed to become stranger each minute; thick clouds swept wildly over the moon and the stars, and Sintram's thoughts grew no less wild and stormy, while far and near an awful howling could be heard amid the trees and the grass. At length the mysterious being arose from the

ground. As if to gratify a fearful curiosity, the moon looked out from behind a cloud, and the sudden gleam of light showed the horror-stricken Sintram that his companion was none other than the Little Master.

"Avaunt!" cried he, "I will listen no more to your evil stories about the knight Paris. They would end by driving me quite mad."

"My stories about Paris are not needed for that!" grinned the Little Master. "It is enough that the Helen of your affections should be journeying toward Montfauçon. Believe me, madness has already taken possession of every part of you. But what should you say were she to remain? For that, however, you must show me more courtesy than you have of late."

Therewith he raised his voice toward the sea, as if fiercely rebuking it, so that Sintram could not keep from shuddering and trembling before the hideous dwarf. But he checked himself, and, grasping his sword-hilt with both hands, he said contemptuously:

"You and Gabrielle! what acquaintance do you pretend to have with Gabrielle?"

"Not much," was the reply. And the Little Master might be seen to quake with fear and rage as he continued: "I can not well bear to hear the name of your Helen; do not din it in my ears ten times in a breath. But if the tempest should increase? If the foaming waves should swell, and roll on till they form an impenetrable barrier round the whole coast of Norway? The voyage to Montfauçon must in that case be altogether given up, and your Helen would remain here at least through the long, long, dark winter!"

"If! if!" replied Sintram with scorn. "Is the sea your bond-slave? Are tempests obedient to you?"

"They are rebels, accursed rebels," muttered the Little

Master. "You must lend me your aid, Sir Knight, if I am to subdue them; but you have not the heart for such a service."

"Boaster, evil boaster!" answered the youth. "What is that you require of me?"

"It is not much, Sir Knight, nothing at all for one who has strength and ardour of soul. You need only look at the sea steadily for one half hour, without ever ceasing to wish intensely that it should foam and rage and swell, and never again become quiet until winter has laid its icy hold upon your mountains. Then King Menelaus will be effectually prevented from undertaking a voyage to Mont-fauçon. And now give me a lock of your black hair, which is blowing so wildly about your head, looking like ravens' or vultures' wings."

The youth drew his sharp dagger, madly cut off a lock of his hair, threw it to the strange being, and, according to his directions, began gazing on the sea and wishing ardently that a storm should arise. And soon the water began to be slightly agitated with a motion almost as imperceptible as the murmuring of one disturbed by uneasy dreams, who would gladly be at rest and yet can not. Sintram was on the point of giving up, when the moonbeams fell on the white sails of a ship which was going rapidly in a southerly direction. A pang shot through his heart as he was thus forcibly reminded of Gabrielle's departure; he wished again with all his power, and fixed his eyes intently on the watery expanse. "Sintram," a voice might have said to him, "ah! Sintram, can you be indeed the very same who but so lately was gazing in deep emotion on the tearful eyes of Gabrielle?"

And now the waves were seen to heave and swell, and a howling tempest swept over the ocean; the breakers, white with foam, became visible in the moonlight. Then

the Little Master threw the lock of Sintram's hair up toward the clouds, and as it was blown to and fro by the blast of wind, the storm burst in all its fury, so that sea and sky were covered with one thick cloud, and far off might be heard the cries of distress from many a sinking vessel.

Just then the crazy pilgrim with the dead-men's bones rose up in the midst of the waves, close to the shore; his height appeared gigantic as he rocked to and fro in a fearful manner; the boat in which he was standing was hid from sight by the raging waves that rose all round it.

"You must save him, Little Master, you must anyhow save him!" cried Sintram, his voice rising in a tone of angry entreaty above the roaring of the winds and waves. But the dwarf replied with a laugh: "Be quite at ease on his account; he will be able to save himself. The waves can do him no harm. Do you see? They are only begging of him, and therefore they jump up so boldly round him. And he gives them bountiful alms; very bountiful, that I can assure you."

Accordingly, the pilgrim was seen to throw some bones into the sea, and to pass on his way without suffering damage. Sintram felt his blood run cold with horror, and he rushed wildly toward the castle. His companion had either fled or vanished away.

XIII

BIORN and Gabrielle and Folko of Montfauçon were sitting around the great stone table, from which, since the arrival of his noble guests, the lord of the castle had caused those suits of armour to be removed that formerly had been his companions. They were placed all together in

a heap in one of the adjoining apartments. At this time, while the storm was beating so furiously against doors and windows, it seemed as if the ancient armour were also stirring in the next room, and Gabrielle several times half rose from her seat in great alarm, fixing her eyes on the small iron door, as though she expected to see an armed spectre issue therefrom, bending down his plumed helmet as he passed underneath the low vaulted doorway.

The knight Biorn smiled grimly, and said, as if reading her thoughts: "Oh, he will never again come out thence; I have put an end to that forever."

His guests looked at him inquiringly, as if anxious to understand his meaning; and with a strange air of unconcern, as though the storm had awakened all the fierceness of his soul, he began this history:

"I was once a happy man myself; I could smile, as you do, and I could rejoice in the clear morning air, as you do; that was before the hypocritical chaplain had so worked on the pious scruples of my lovely wife as to induce her to shut herself up in a cloister, and leave me alone with my ungovernable child. That was not fair usage on the part of the fair Verena. Well, so it was that in the first days of her dawning beauty, before I knew her, many knights sought her hand, among whom was Sir Weigand the Slender; and toward him the gentle maiden showed herself the most favourably inclined. Her parents were well aware that Weigand's rank and station were little below their own, and that his fame as a warrior without reproach promised to stand high; so that before long it was generally known that Verena and he were betrothed to each other. It happened one day that they were walking together in the garden of her father's castle, at the time when a shepherd was driving his flock up the mountain beyond. The maiden took a fancy to a little snow-

white lamb which she saw frolicking about, and wished to have it. Weigand flew out of the garden, overtook the shepherd, and offered him two pieces of gold for the lamb. But the shepherd would not part with it, and scarcely listened to the knight, going quietly the while up the mountain side. Weigand persevered, but, failing in his attempts, he lost patience, and at last uttered some threat. The shepherd, who was not wanting in the pride and stubbornness of all our northern peasants, threatened in return. Suddenly Weigand's sword glittered above his head. The stroke should have fallen lightly, but who can control a fiery horse or an angry warrior's arm? The shepherd's head seemed cleft asunder by the blow; he rolled bathed in blood down to the very bottom of the precipice; his terrified flock dispersed on the mountains. The little lamb alone took refuge in the garden, and, all sprinkled with its master's blood, it laid itself down at Verena's feet, as if asking for protection. She took it up in her arms, and from that moment never suffered Weigand to appear again in her presence. She continued to cherish the little lamb, and seemed to take pleasure in nothing else in the world, while she became each day more and more pale, like the lilies, and her every thought was devoted to Heaven. She would soon have taken the veil, but just then I came to aid her father in a war in which he was engaged, and saved him from his too powerful enemies. As a reward of my services, he prevailed on his daughter to give me her fair hand. The overwhelming weight of his affliction would not suffer the unhappy Weigand to remain in his own country; he went as a pilgrim to Asia, whence our forefathers came, and there he performed wondrous deeds of valour, not omitting acts of humiliation and penitence. I could not hear him spoken of in those days without my heart being strangely moved with compassion. Years rolled by,

and he returned, meaning to erect a church or monastery on that mountain, toward the west, whence the walls of my castle are distinctly seen. It was said that he wished to become a priest there, but it fell out otherwise. For some pirates having sailed from the southern seas toward our coasts, and having heard mention made of this monastery which was in progress, their chief hoped to find much gold in the possession of those who were building it, or to get a large ransom for them, if he should succeed in surprising them and carrying them off. He could not have known much about the valour of northern warriors! However, he soon arrived, and, having landed in the creek under the black rocks, he led his men through a bypath up to the building, surrounded it, and thought in himself that the game was now in his hands. Ha! then out rushed Weigand and his builders, and fell upon them with swords, and hatchets, and hammers. The heathen fled away to their ships, closely pursued by Weigand. In passing by our castle he caught sight of Verena on the terrace, and, for the first time during so many years, she bestowed a courteous and kind salutation on the victorious warrior. At that moment a dagger, hurled by one of the pirates in his hasty flight, struck Weigand's uncovered head, and he fell to the ground bleeding and insensible. We completed the rout of the heathen. Then I directed the wounded knight to be brought into the castle; and my Verena's pale cheeks glowed as lilies do in the light of the morning sun, and Weigand opened his eyes with a smile when he was brought near her. He refused to be taken into any room but the small one close to this, where the armour is now placed; for he said he felt as if it were a cell like that which he hoped soon to inhabit in the quiet cloister he was erecting. All was done conformably to his desire; my sweet Verena nursed him, and he appeared at

first to be advancing favourably toward recovery, but his head continued weak, and liable to be confused by the slightest emotion; his steps were faltering, and his cheeks colourless. We would not suffer him to depart. When we were sitting here together in the evening, he used always to come tottering into the hall through the low doorway; and my heart was sad, and wrathful too, when the soft eyes of Verena beamed so sweetly on him, and a glow like that of the evening sky lighted up her pale countenance. But I bore it, and I could have borne it to the end of our lives—when, alas! Verena shut herself up in a cloister!”

His head fell so heavily on his folded hands that the stone table groaned under it, and he remained a long while motionless as a corpse. When he again raised himself his eyes glared as he looked round the hall, and he said to Folko: “Your beloved Hamburgers, Gotthard Lenz and Rudlieb his son, they have much to answer for! Who bade them come and be shipwrecked so close to my castle?”

Folko cast a piercing look on him, and a fearful inquiry was on the point of escaping his lips; but another look at the trembling Gabrielle caused him to refrain, at least for the present moment, and the knight Biorn continued his narrative:

“Verena was with her nuns, I was left alone, and my despair had driven me to the mountains and the forest during the whole day. Toward evening I returned to my deserted castle, and scarcely was I in the hall when the little door creaked on its hinges, and Weigand, who had slept through all, crept toward me and asked, ‘Where can Verena be?’ Then I became like one out of his senses, and I shouted, ‘She is gone mad, and so am I, and you also, and now we are all mad!’ Merciful Heaven! the wound on his head burst open, and a dark-red stream

flowed over his face—alas! how different from the redness which overspread it when Verena met him at the castle gate—and he rushed forth, raving mad, into the wilderness without, and ever since has wandered all around as a crazy pilgrim.”

He was silent, and so were Folko and Gabrielle—all three pale and cold, like images of the dead. At length the fearful narrator added in a low voice, and as if he were quite exhausted:

“He has visited me since that time, but he will never again come through the low doorway. Have I not established peace and order in my castle?”

XIV

SINTRAM had not returned home when the inhabitants of the castle betook themselves to rest in great disturbance of mind. No one thought of him, for every heart was filled with strange forebodings of evil and with undefined anxiety. Even the firm heroic spirit of the knight of Montfauçon did not escape the general agitation.

Old Rolf still remained without, weeping in the forest, heedless of the storm that beat on his unprotected head, while he waited for his young master. But he had gone a very different way, and when the morning dawned he entered the castle from the opposite side.

Gabrielle's slumbers had been but too sweet during the whole night. It had seemed to her that angels with golden wings had blown away the wild histories she had listened to the evening before, and had wafted to her the bright flowers, the sparkling sea, and the green hills of her own home. She smiled, and drew her breath calmly and softly,

while the supernatural tempest raged and howled through the forest, and kept up a fearful conflict with the troubled sea. But, in truth, when she awoke in the morning, and heard the crashing of the storm still continuing, and saw the clouds still hiding the face of the heavens, she could have wept for anxiety and sadness, especially when she heard from her maidens that Folko had left their apartment clad in full armour as if prepared for a combat. At the same time she could distinguish the sounds of the heavy tread of armed men in the echoing halls, and, on inquiring, found that the knight of Montfauçon had assembled all his retainers to be in readiness to protect their lady.

Wrapped in a cloak of ermine, she stood trembling like a tender flower which has just sprung up out of the snow, and is exposed to the rude blasts of a winter's storm. At that moment Sir Folko entered the room, arrayed in his brilliant armour, and in peaceful guise carrying his golden helmet, with the long, shadowy plumes in his hand. He saluted Gabrielle with an air of cheerful serenity, and, at a sign from him, his attendants retired—the men-at-arms without were heard quietly dispersing.

"Lady," said he, as he took his seat beside her on a couch to which he led her, already reassured by his presence—"lady, will you forgive your knight for having left you to endure some moments of anxiety while he was obeying the call of honour and the stern voice of duty? Now all is set in order, quietly and peacefully; dismiss your fears and every thought that has troubled you, as things that have no longer any existence."

"But you and Biorn?" asked Gabrielle.

"On the word of a knight," replied he, "all is as it should be." And thereupon he began to talk over

indifferent subjects with his usual ease and vivacity; but Gabrielle, bending toward him, said with deep emotion:

"O Folko, my knight, the guiding star of my life, my protector, and my dearest hope on earth, tell me all, if you may. If you are bound by a promise to keep anything secret, I ask no more. You know that I am of the race of Portamour, and I would ask nothing from my knight that could cast even a breath of suspicion on his spotless shield."

Folko thought gravely for one instant; then, looking at her with a bright smile, he said: "It is not that, Gabrielle, but can you bear what I have to disclose? Will you not sink down at the tidings, as a slender fir gives way under a mass of snow?"

She raised herself with a somewhat proud air, and said: "I have already reminded you of the name of my father's house. Let me now add that I am the wedded wife of the Baron of Montfauçon."

"Then so let it be," replied Folko solemnly; "and if that must come forth openly which should ever have remained hidden in the darkness which belongs to such deeds of wickedness, at least the horror of longer expectation shall not be added to it. Know then, Gabrielle, that the wicked knight who attempted the destruction of my friends Gotthard and Rudlieb is none other than our kinsman and host, Biorn of the Fiery Eyes."

Gabrielle shuddered and covered her eyes with her fair hands; but at the end of a moment she looked up with a bewildered air, and said: "I have heard wrong surely, although it is true that yesterday evening such a thought flashed across my mind. For did not you say awhile ago that all was settled and at peace between you and Biorn?"

Between the brave baron and such a man after such a crime?"

"You heard aright," answered Folko, looking with fond delight on the delicate yet noble-spirited being beside him. "This morning with the earliest dawn I went to him and challenged him to a mortal combat in the neighbouring valley if he were the man to whose cruelty Gott-hard and Rudlieb had so well-nigh fallen victims. He was already completely armed, and, merely saying, 'I am he,' he led the way toward the forest. But when we stood alone at the place of combat, he flung away his shield down a giddy precipice, then his sword was hurled after it, and next with gigantic strength he tore off his coat of mail, and said, 'Now fall on, thou minister of vengeance, for I am a man laden with guilt, and I dare not fight with thee.' How could I then attack him? A strange kind of truce was agreed on between us—he is to be my vassal to a certain extent, and yet I solemnly forgave him in my own name and in that of my friends. He was contrite, and yet no tear was in his eye, no word of penitence on his lips. He is only kept under by the power with which I am endowed by having right on my side, and it is on that tenure that Biorn is my vassal. I know not, lady, whether you can bear to see us together on these terms; if not, I will ask for hospitality in some other castle—there are none in Norway which would not receive us joyfully and honourably, and this wild autumnal storm may put off our voyage for many a day. Only I feel persuaded of this, that if we depart directly and in such a manner the heart of this savage man will break."

"Where my noble lord remains, there am I content to remain also under his protection," replied Gabrielle, and again her heart glowed with rapture at the greatness of her knight.

XV

THE noble lady had just unbuckled her knight's armour with her own fair hands—for it was only on the field of battle that pages or esquires were permitted to perform that office for Montfauçon—and now she was throwing over his shoulders his mantle of blue velvet embroidered with gold, when the door opened gently, and Sintram, entering the room, saluted them with an air of deep humility. Gabrielle received him kindly, as she was wont, but, suddenly turning pale, she looked away and said: "O Sintram! what has happened to you? And how can one single night have so fearfully altered you?"

Sintram stood still, thunderstruck, and feeling as if he himself did not know what had befallen him. Then Folko took him by the hand, led him toward a bright polished shield, and said very earnestly, "Look here at yourself, young knight!"

No sooner had Sintram cast a glance at the mirror than he drew back with horror. He fancied that he saw the Little Master before him with that single upright feather sticking out of his cap; but he at length perceived that the mirror was only showing him his own image and none other, and that it was owing to the lock of hair cut off by his own dagger that his whole appearance had become so strange, nay, even unearthly, as he was obliged to confess himself.

"Who has done that to you?" asked Folko in a tone still more grave and solemn. "And why does your disordered hair stand on end?"

Sintram knew not what to answer. He felt as if he were standing to be judged, and as if his sentence could be none other than a shameful degradation from his knightly rank. Suddenly Folko drew him away from the

shield, and, taking him toward the window against which the storm was beating, he asked, "Whence comes this tempest?"

Still Sintram kept silence. His limbs began to tremble under him, and Gabrielle, pale and terrified, whispered: "O Folko! my knight, what has happened? Oh, tell me; are we come into an evil-enchanted castle?"

"The land of our northern ancestors," replied Folko with solemnity, "is full of mysterious knowledge. But we may not, for all that, call its people enchanters; still, this youth has good cause to watch himself narrowly; he whom the Evil One has touched by so much as one hair of his head"

Sintram heard no more; with a deep groan he staggered out of the room. As he left it he met old Rolf, still almost benumbed by his exposure to the cold and storms of the night. Now in his joy at again seeing his young master, he did not remark his altered appearance; but as he accompanied him to his sleeping room he said: "Witches and spirits of the tempest must have taken up their abode on the sea-shore. I am certain that such wild storms never arise without some magical arts."

Sintram fell into a fainting fit, from which Rolf could with difficulty recover him sufficiently to appear in the great hall at the midday repast. But before he went down he caused a mirror to be brought, and, having again surveyed himself therein with grief and horror, he cut close round all the rest of his long black hair, so that he made himself look almost like a monk, and thus he joined the party already assembled round the table. They all looked at him with surprise, but old Biorn rose and said fiercely, "Are you going to betake yourself to a cloister as well as the fair lady, your mother?"

A commanding look from the Baron of Montfauçon

checked any further outbreak, and, as if in apology, Biorn added with a forced smile, "I was only thinking if any accident had befallen him, like Absalom's, and if he had been obliged to save himself from being strangled by parting with all his hair."

"You should not jest on sacred subjects," answered the baron severely, and all were silent. No sooner was the repast ended than Folko and Gabrielle, with grave and courteous salutation, retired to their own apartments.

XVI

AFTER this time a great change took place in the mode of living of the inhabitants of the castle. Those two bright beings, Folko and Gabrielle, spent most of the day in their apartments, and when they appeared below their intercourse with Biorn and Sintram was marked by a grave, dignified reserve on their part, and by humility mixed with fear on that of their hosts. Nevertheless, Biorn could not endure the thought of his guests seeking shelter in any other knight's abode. Once that Folko said a word on the subject, something like a tear stood in the wild man's eye, his head sank, and he said in a scarcely audible voice: "It must be as you please: but I feel that if you go I shall fly to the caves and rocks in despair."

And thus they all remained together; for the storm continued to rage with such increasing fury over the sea that no thought of embarking could be entertained, and the oldest man in Norway could not call to mind having witnessed such an autumn. The priests examined all the Runic books, the bards looked through their store of lays and tales, and yet they could find no record of the like.

Biorn and Sintram braved the tempest; but during the few hours in which Folko and Gabrielle showed themselves, the father and son were always in the castle, in respectful attendance upon them; the rest of the day—nay, even frequently the whole night long—they rushed through the forests and over the rocks in pursuit of bears. Folko the while summoned to his aid all the brightness of his fancy, all the courtly grace he was endowed with, in order to make Gabrielle forget that she was living in this wild castle, and that the long, hard northern winter was setting in, which would keep her there an ice-bound prisoner for many a month. Sometimes he would relate tales of deep interest; then he would play the liveliest airs to induce Gabrielle to tread a measure with her attendants; then, again, handing his lute to one of the women, he would himself take a part in the dance, never failing to express by his gestures his homage and devotion to his lady. Another time he would have the spacious halls of the castle prepared for his armed retainers to go through their warlike exercises and trials of strength, and Gabrielle always adjudged the reward to the conqueror. Folko often joined the circle of combatants; but always took care to deprive no one of the prize, by confining his efforts merely to parrying the blows aimed at him. The Norwegians, who stood round as spectators, used to compare him to the demi-god Baldur, one of the heroes of their old traditions, who was wont to let the darts of his companions be all hurled against him, conscious that he was invulnerable, and trusting in his own inherent strength.

At the close of one of these martial exercises old Rolf advanced toward Folko, and, beckoning him with a humble look, he said softly: "They call you Baldur the brave, the good—and they are right. But even the good and brave

Baldur did not escape death. Take heed to yourself." Folko looked at him with surprise. "Not that I know of any treacherous design against you," continued the old man, "or that I can even foresee the likelihood of any being formed. God forbid that a Norwegian should feel such a fear! But when you stand before me in all the brightness of your glory, the fleeting nature of everything earthly is brought strongly to my mind, and I can not refrain from saying: 'Take heed, noble baron! oh, take heed! There is nothing, however great, which does not come to an end.'"

"Those are wise and pious thoughts," replied Folko calmly, "and I will treasure them in my inmost heart."

The good Rolf frequently spent some time with Folko and Gabrielle, and appeared to form a connecting link between the two widely differing parties in the castle. For how could he ever have forsaken his own Sintram! It was only in their wild hunting expeditions, when they had no regard to the storms and tempests that were raging, that he no longer was able to follow his young lord.

At length the icy reign of winter began in all its glory. The season was sufficient of itself to prevent any thought of a return to Normandy, and therefore the storm that had been raised by magical art was lulled. The hills and valleys shone brilliantly in their white attire of snow, and Folko used sometimes, with skates on his feet, to draw his lady in a light sledge over the glittering frozen lakes and streams. On the other hand, the bear-hunts of the lord of the castle and his son assumed a still more desperate and to them enjoyable aspect.

About this time—when Christmas was drawing near, and Sintram was seeking to overpower his apprehensions of the fearful dreams that were wont to trouble him then

by the most daring expeditions—about this time Folko and Gabrielle chanced to be standing together on one of the terraces of the castle. The evening was mild; the snow-clad fields were glowing in the red light of the setting sun; from below were heard men's voices singing songs of ancient heroic times while they worked in the armourer's forge. At last the songs died away, the beating of hammers ceased, and without the speakers being visible, or any possibility of distinguishing them by their voices, this discourse was distinctly heard:

"Who is the bravest among all those whose race derives its origin from our renowned land?"

"It is Folko of Montfauçon."

"Rightly said; but, tell me, is there any danger from which even this bold baron draws back?"

"In truth there is one thing—and we who never have left Norway face it quite willingly and joyfully."

"And that is?"

"A bear-hunt in winter, over trackless plains of snow, down frightful ice-covered precipices."

"Truly thou answerest aright, my comrade. He who knows not how to fasten our skates on his feet, how to turn in them to the right or left at a moment's warning, he may be a valiant knight in other respects, but he had better keep away from our hunting parties, and remain with his timid wife in her apartments." At which the speakers were heard to laugh as if well pleased, and then to betake themselves again to their armourers' work.

Folko stood long buried in thought. A glow beyond that of the evening sky reddened his cheek. Gabrielle also remained silent, revolving in her mind that for which she was unable to find words. At last she took courage, and, embracing her beloved, she said: "To-morrow you will

go forth to hunt the bear, will you not? and you will bring the spoils of the chase to your lady?"

The knight gave a joyful sign of assent; and the rest of the evening was spent in dances and music.

XVII

"SEE, my noble lord," said Sintram the next morning, when Folko had expressed his wish of going out with him, "these skates of ours give such wings to our course that we go down the mountain-side more swiftly than the wind, and even in going up again we are too quick for any one to be able to pursue us, and on the plains no horse can keep up with us, and yet they can only be worn with safety by those who are well practised. It seems as if some strange spirit dwelt in them, which is fearfully dangerous to any that have not learned the management of them in childhood."

Folko answered somewhat proudly: "Do you suppose this is the first time that I have been among your mountains? Years ago I joined in this sport, and, thank Heaven! there is no knightly exercise that does not speedily become familiar to me."

Sintram did not venture to make any further objections, and still less did old Biorn. They both felt relieved when they saw with what skill and ease Folko buckled the skates on his feet, without suffering any one to assist him. This day they hunted up the mountain, in pursuit of a fierce bear that had often escaped from them. Before long it was necessary that they should separate into different parties, and Sintram offered himself as companion to Folko, who, touched by the humble manner of the youth, and his

devotion to him, forgot all that had disturbed him latterly in the pale, altered being before him, and agreed heartily to his proposal. As now they continued to climb higher and higher up the mountain, and saw from many a giddy height the rocks and crags below them looking like a vast expanse of sea suddenly turned into ice while tossed by a violent tempest, the noble Montfauçon drew his breath more freely. He poured forth war-songs and love-songs in the clear mountain air, and the startled echoes repeated from rock to rock the lays of his southern home. He sprang lightly from one precipice to another, making use skilfully of the staff with which he was furnished for support, and turning now to the right, now to the left, as the fancy seized him, so that Sintram was fain to exchange his former anxiety for a wondering admiration, and the hunters, whose eyes never had been taken off the baron, burst forth with loud applause, proclaiming this fresh proof of his prowess.

The good fortune that usually accompanied Folko's deeds of arms appeared still unwilling to leave him. After a short search, he and Sintram found distinct traces of the savage animal they were pursuing, and with beating hearts they followed the track so swiftly that even a winged enemy would have been unable to escape from them. But the creature they sought did not attempt a flight—he lay sulkily ensconced in a cavern near the top of a steep precipitous rock, infuriated by the shouts of the hunters, and only waiting for some one to be bold enough to climb up to his retreat, that he might tear him to pieces. Folko and Sintram had now reached the foot of this rock, the rest of the hunters being dispersed over the far-extending plain. The track led the two companions up the rock, and they set about climbing on the opposite sides of it, that they might be the more sure of not missing their

prey. Folko reached the lonely topmost point first, and cast his eyes around. A wide, boundless tract of country, covered with untrodden snow, was spread before him, melting in the distance into the lowering clouds of the gloomy evening sky. He almost thought that he must have missed the traces of the fearful animal, when close beside him, from a cleft in the rock, issued a long growl, and a huge black bear appeared on the snow, standing on its hind legs, and with glaring eyes advanced toward the baron. Sintram the while was struggling in vain to make his way up the rock against the masses of snow that were continually slipping down upon him.

Rejoicing in an adventure such as he had not encountered for years, and which now appeared new to him, Folko of Montfauçon levelled his hunting spear and awaited the attack of the wild beast. He suffered it to approach so near that its fearful claws were almost upon him; then he made a thrust, and the spear was buried deep in the bear's breast. But the furious beast still pressed on with a fierce growl, kept up on its hind legs by the cross iron of the spear, and the knight was forced to use all his strength not to lose his footing and to resist the savage assault; and the whole time there was the grim face of the bear close before him, and sounding in his ear was its deep, savage growl, which told of its thirst for blood, even in the midst of its death struggles. At length the bear's resistance grew weaker, and the dark blood streamed upon the snow; one powerful thrust hurled him backward over the edge of the precipice. At the same instant Sintram stood by the Baron of Montfauçon. Folko said, drawing a deep breath:

"But I have not yet the prize in my hands, and have it I must, since fortune has given me a claim to it. Look, one of my skates appears to be out of order. Do you think,

Sintram, that it is in such a state as not to hinder me in sliding down to the foot of the precipice?"

"Let me go instead," said Sintram. "I will bring you the head and the claws of the bear."

"A true knight," replied Folko with some displeasure, "never leaves his work to be finished by another. What I ask is, whether my skate is still fit for use?"

As Sintram bent down to look, and was on the point of saying "No!" he suddenly heard a voice close to him, saying: "Why, yes, to be sure; there is no doubt about it."

Folko thought Sintram had spoken, and darted off with the swiftness of an arrow, while his companion looked up in great surprise. The abhorred features of the Little Master met his eyes. As he was going to address him with angry words, he heard the sound of the baron's fearful fall down the precipice, and he stood still in silent horror. There was a breathless silence also in the abyss below.

"Now, why do you delay?" said the Little Master, after a pause. "He is dashed to pieces. Go back to the castle, and take the fair Helen to yourself."

Sintram shuddered. Then his detestable companion began to extol Gabrielle's charms in such glowing, deceiving words that the heart of the youth swelled with a torrent of emotions he never before had known. He only thought of him who was now lying at the foot of the rock as of an obstacle removed from his way to paradise; he turned toward the castle.

But a cry was heard below: "Help! help! my comrade! I am still alive, but I am sorely wounded."

Sintram's will was changed, and he called to the baron, "I am coming!"

But the Little Master said: "Nothing can be done to help King Menelaus; and the fair Helen knows it already."

She is only waiting for Knight Paris to comfort her." And with detestable craft he wove in that tale with what was actually happening, bringing in the most highly wrought praises of the lovely Gabrielle; and, alas! the blinded youth hearkened to him, and fled away! Again he heard far off the baron's voice calling to him: "Knight Sintram, Knight Sintram, you on whom I bestowed that noble order, haste to me and help me! The she-bear and her cubs will be upon me, and I can not use my right arm! Knight Sintram, Knight Sintram, haste to help me!"

His cries were overpowered by the furious speed with which the two were carried along on their skates, and by the evil words of the Little Master, who was mocking at the late proud bearing of King Menelaus toward the miserable Sintram. At last he shouted: "Good luck to you, she-bear! good luck to your cubs! There is a glorious meal for you! Now you will destroy the fear of heathendom, him at whose name the Moorish women weep, the mighty Baron of Montfauçon. Never again, O dainty knight, will you shout at the head of your troops, 'Mountjoy St. Denys!'" But scarcely had this holy name passed the lips of the Little Master when he set up a howl of anguish, writhing himself with horrible contortions, and wringing his hands, and he ended by disappearing in a storm of snow which then arose.

Sintram planted his staff firmly in the ground, and stopped. How strangely did the wide expanse of snow, the distant mountains rising above it, and the dark green fir woods—how strangely did they all look at him in cold, reproachful silence! He felt as if he must sink under the weight of his sorrow and his guilt. The bell of a distant hermitage came floating sadly over the plain. With a burst of tears he exclaimed, as the darkness grew thicker around him:

"My mother! my mother! I had once a beloved tender mother, and she said I was a good child!"

A ray of comfort came to him as if brought on an angel's wing; perhaps Montfauçon was not yet dead! and he flew like lightning along the path that led back to the steep rock. When he got to the fearful place, he stooped and looked anxiously down the precipice. The moon, which had just risen in full majesty, helped him with her light. The knight of Montfauçon, pale and covered with blood, was supporting himself on one knee, and leaning against the rock—his right arm, which had been crushed in his fall, hung powerless at his side; it was plain that he had not been able to draw his good sword out of the scabbard. But, nevertheless, he was keeping the bear and her young ones at bay by his bold, threatening looks, so that they only crept round him, growling angrily, every moment ready for a fierce attack, but as often driven back affrighted at the majestic air by which he conquered even when defenceless.

"Oh, what a knight would here have perished!" groaned Sintram; "and through whose guilt?"

At that instant his spear flew with so true an aim that the bear fell weltering in her blood, and the young ones ran away howling.

The baron looked up with surprise. His countenance beamed as the light of the moon fell upon it with a grave and stern yet mild expression, like some angelic vision. He made a sign to Sintram to come to him, and the youth slid down the side of the precipice, full of anxious haste. He was going to attend to the wounded knight, but Folko said:

"First cut off the head and claws of the bear which I slew. I promised to bring the spoils of the chase to my lovely Gabrielle. Then come to me, and bind up my wounds. My right arm is broken."

Sintram obeyed the baron's commands. When the tokens of victory had been secured, and the broken arm bound up, Folko desired the youth to help him back to the castle.

"O Heavens!" said Sintram in a low voice, "if I dared to look in your face! or only knew how to come near you!"

"You were indeed going on in an evil course," said Montfauçon gravely; "but how could any of us stand before God did we not bring repentance with us! Anyhow, you have saved my life, and let that cheer your heart."

The youth with tenderness and strength supported the baron's left arm, and they went their way silently in the moonlight.

XVIII

SOUNDS of wailing were heard from the castle as they approached; the chapel was solemnly lighted up: within it kneeled Gabrielle, lamenting for the death of the knight of Montfauçon.

But how quickly was the scene changed when the noble baron, pale, indeed, and wounded, yet having escaped the dangers that beset his life, stood smiling at the entrance of the holy building, and said in a low, gentle voice:

"Look up, Gabrielle, and be not affrighted: for by the honour of my race your knight still lives."

Oh, with what joy did Gabrielle's eyes sparkle as she turned to her knight and then raised them again to heaven, the tears that still streamed from them having now their source in the deep joy of thankfulness! With the help of two pages, Folko knelt beside her, and they offered up a

silent prayer of thanksgiving for their present happiness.

When they all left the chapel, the wounded knight being tenderly supported by his lady, Sintram was standing without in the darkness, himself as gloomy as the night, and like a bird of the night shunning the sight of man. Yet he came trembling forward into the torchlight, laid the bear's head and claws at the feet of Gabrielle, and said, "The noble Folko of Montfauçon presents the spoils of to-day's chase to his lady."

The Norwegians burst forth with shouts of joyful surprise at the stranger knight, who in the very first hunting expedition had slain the most fearful and dangerous beast of their mountains.

Then Folko looked around with a smile as he said, "And now none of you must jeer at me if I stay at home for a short time with my timid wife."

Those who the day before had talked together in the armourers' forge came out from the crowd, and, bowing low, replied, "Noble baron, who could have thought there was no knightly exercise in the whole world in which you would not show yourself far above all other men?"

"The pupil of old Sir Hugh may be somewhat trusted," answered Folko kindly. "But now, you bold northern warriors, bestow some praises also on my deliverer, who saved me from the claws of the she-bear when I was lying under the rock, wounded by my fall."

He pointed to Sintram, and the general shout was again raised, and old Rolf, his eyes dim with tears of joy, bent his head over his foster-son's hand. But Sintram drew back shuddering.

"Did you but know," he said, "whom you see before you, all your spears would be aimed at my heart, and perhaps that would be the best thing that could befall me.

But I spare the honour of my father and of his race, and for this time I will not make a confession. Only this much must you hear, noble warriors."

"Young man," interrupted Folko, with a reproving look, "already again so wild and fierce? I desire that you will hold your peace about your dreaming fancies."

Sintram was silenced for a moment, but hardly had Folko begun to move toward the steps of the castle when he cried out:

"Oh, no, no, noble wounded knight, stay yet awhile; I will serve you in everything that your heart can desire, but this once I can not obey you. Brave warriors, you must and shall know so much as this: I am no longer worthy to live under the same roof with the noble Baron of Montfauçon and his angelic lady Gabrielle. And you, my aged father, farewell: take no further heed of me. I intend to live in the stone fortress on the Rocks of the Moon until a change of some kind comes over me."

There was that in his way of speaking against which no one dared to urge any opposition, not even Folko himself.

The wild Biorn bowed his head humbly, and said: "Do according to your pleasure, my poor son; for I much fear that you are right."

Then Sintram walked solemnly and silently through the castle gate, followed by the good Rolf, while Gabrielle led her exhausted lord up to their apartments.

XIX

THAT was a mournful journey on which the youth and his aged foster-father went toward the Rocks of the Moon through the wild, tangled paths of the snow-covered val-

leys. Rolf from time to time sang some verses of hymns, in which comfort and peace were promised to the penitent sinner, and Sintram thanked him for them with looks of grateful sadness. Otherwise neither of them spoke a word. At length, when the dawn of day was approaching, Sintram broke silence by saying:

"Who are those two sitting yonder by the frozen stream? A tall man and a little one. Their own wild hearts must have driven them also forth into the wilderness. Rolf, do you know them? The sight of them makes me shudder."

"Sir," answered the old man, "your disturbed mind deceives you. Where you are looking stands a lofty fir-tree, and the old weather-beaten stump of an oak, half covered with snow, which gives them a somewhat strange appearance. There are no men sitting yonder."

"But, Rolf, look there! Look again carefully! Now they move, they whisper together."

"Sir, the morning breeze moves the branches, and whistles in the sharp pine leaves and in the yellow oak leaves, and rustles the crisp snow."

"Rolf, now they are both coming toward us. Now they are standing before us; they are quite close."

"Sir, it is we who get nearer to them as we walk on, and the setting moon throws long giant-like shadows over the plain."

"Good-evening!" said a hollow voice, and Sintram knew it was the crazy pilgrim, near to whom stood the malignant dwarf, looking more hideous than ever.

"You are right, Sir Knight," whispered Rolf, as he drew back behind Sintram, and made the sign of the cross on his breast and forehead.

The bewildered youth advanced toward the two figures, and said: "You have always taken wonderful pleas-

ure in being my companions. What do you expect will come of it? And do you choose to go now with me to the stone fortress? There I will tend you, poor pale pilgrim; and as to you, frightful Master, most evil dwarf, I will make you shorter by the head, to reward you for your deeds yesterday."

"That would be a fine thing," sneered the Little Master; "and perhaps you imagine that you would be doing a great service to the whole world? And, indeed, who knows? Something might be gained by it! Only, poor wretch, you can not do it."

The pilgrim meantime was waving his pale head to and fro thoughtfully, saying: "I believe truly that you would willingly have me, and I would go to you willingly, but I may not yet. Have patience awhile; you will yet surely see me come, but at a distant time, and, first, we must again visit your father together, and then also you will learn to call me by my right name, my poor friend."

"Beware of disappointing me again!" said Little Master to the pilgrim in a threatening voice; but he, pointing with his long, shrivelled hand toward the sun, which was just now rising, said, "Stop either that sun or me if you can!"

Then the first rays fell on the snow, and Little Master ran down a precipice, scolding as he went; but the pilgrim walked on in the bright beams, calmly and with great solemnity, toward a neighbouring castle on the mountain. It was not long before its chapel bell was heard tolling for the dead.

"For Heaven's sake," whispered the good Rolf to his knight—"for Heaven's sake, Sir Sintram, what kind of companions have you here? One of them can not bear the light of God's blessed sun, and the other has no sooner

set foot in a dwelling than the passing-bell is heard from it! Could he have been a murderer?"

"I do not think that," said Sintram. "He seemed to me the better of the two. But it is a strange wilfulness of his not to come with me. Did I not invite him kindly? I believe that he can sing well, and he should have sung to me some gentle lullaby. Since my mother has lived in a cloister, no one sings lullabies to me any more."

At this tender recollection his eyes were bedewed with tears. But he did not himself know what he had said besides, for there were wildness and confusion in his spirit. They arrived at the Rocks of the Moon, they mounted up to the stone fortress. The castellan, an old, gloomy man, who was all the more devoted to the young knight from his dark melancholy and wild deeds, hastened to lower the drawbridge. Greetings were exchanged in silence, and in silence did Sintram enter, and those joyless gates closed with a crash behind the future recluse.

XX

YES, truly, a recluse, or at least something like it, did poor Sintram now become! For toward the time of the approaching Christmas festival his fearful dreams came over him, and seized him so fiercely that all the esquires and servants fled with shrieks out of the castle, and never would venture back again. No one remained with him except Rolf and the old castellan. After a while, indeed, Sintram became calm, but he went about looking so pallid and subdued that he might have been taken for a wandering corpse. No comforting of the good Rolf, no devout soothing lays, were of any avail; and the castellan, with his

fierce, scarred features, his head almost entirely bald from a huge sword-cut, and his stubborn silence seemed like a still darker shadow of the miserable knight. Rolf often thought of going to summon the holy chaplain of Drontheim, but how could he have left his lord alone with the gloomy castellan, a man who at all times raised in him a secret horror? Biorn had long had this wild, strange warrior in his service, and honoured him on account of his unshaken fidelity and his fearless courage, without the knight or any one else knowing whence the castellan came, or indeed exactly who he was. Very few people knew by what name to call him, but that was the more needless since he never entered into discourse with any one. He was the castellan of the stone fortress on the Rocks of the Moon, and nothing more.

Rolf committed his deep, heartfelt cares to the merciful God, trusting that he would soon come to his aid, and the merciful God did not fail him. For on Christmas eve the bell at the drawbridge sounded, and Rolf, looking over the battlements, saw the chaplain of Drontheim standing there, with a companion indeed that surprised him—for close beside him appeared the crazy pilgrim, and the dead men's bones on his dark mantle shone very strangely in the glimmering starlight; but the sight of the chaplain filled the good Rolf too full of joy to leave room for any doubt in his mind—for, thought he, whoever comes with him can not but be welcome! And so he let them in with respectful haste, and ushered them up to the hall where Sintram, pale and with a fixed look, was sitting under the light of one flickering lamp. Rolf was obliged to support and assist the crazy pilgrim up the stairs, for he was benumbed with cold.

"I bring you a greeting from your mother," said the chaplain as he came in, and immediately a sweet smile

passed over the young knight's countenance, and its deadly pallor gave place to a bright, soft glow.

"O Heaven!" murmured he, "does then my mother still live, and does she care to know anything about me?"

"She is endowed with wonderful presentiment," replied the chaplain, "and all that you ought either to do or to leave undone is pictured in various ways in her mind during a half-waking trance, but with most faithful exactness. Now she knows of your deep sorrow, and she sends me, the father confessor of her convent, to comfort you, but at the same time to warn you, for, as she affirms, and as I also am inclined to think, many strange and heavy trials lie before you."

Sintram bowed himself toward the chaplain with his arms crossed over his breast, and said with a gentle smile: "Much have I been favoured—more, a thousand times more, than I could have dared to hope in my best hours—by this greeting from my mother, and your visit, reverend sir; and all after falling more fearfully low than I ever had fallen before. The mercy of the Lord is great, and how heavy soever may be the weight and punishment he may send, I trust with his grace to be able to bear it."

Just then the door opened, and the castellan came in with a torch in his hand, the red glare of which made his face look the colour of blood. He cast a terrified glance at the crazy pilgrim, who had just sunk back in a swoon, and was supported on his seat and tended by Rolf; then he stared with astonishment at the chaplain, and at last murmured:

"A strange meeting! I believe that the hour for confession and reconciliation is now arrived."

"I believe so, too," replied the priest, who had heard his low whisper. "This seems to be truly a day rich in grace and peace. That poor man yonder, whom I found

half frozen by the way, would make a full confession to me at once before he followed me to a place of shelter. Do as he has done, my dark-browed warrior, and delay not your good purpose for one instant."

Thereupon he left the room with the castellan, who gave a sign of compliance; but he turned back to say, "Sir Knight, and your esquire, take good care the while of my sick charge."

Sintram and Rolf did according to the chaplain's desire, and when at length their cordials made the pilgrim open his eyes once again, the young knight said to him with a friendly smile:

"Do you see? you are come to visit me, after all. Why did you refuse me when a few nights ago I asked you so earnestly to come? Perhaps I may have spoken wildly and hastily. Did that scare you away?"

A sudden expression of fear came over the pilgrim's countenance, but soon he again looked up at Sintram with an air of gentle humility, saying:

"Oh, my dear lord, I am most entirely devoted to you—only never speak to me of former passages between you and me. I am terrified whenever you do it. For, my lord, either I am mad and have forgotten all that is past, or that being has met you in the wood whom I look upon as my all-powerful twin-brother."

Sintram laid his hand gently on the pilgrim's mouth as he answered: "Say nothing more about that matter. I most willingly promise to be silent."

Neither he nor old Rolf could understand what appeared to them so awful in the whole matter, but both shuddered.

After a short pause, the pilgrim said: "I would rather sing you a song, a soft, comforting song. Have you not a lute here?"

Rolf fetched one, and the pilgrim, half raising himself on the couch, sang these words:

“When death is coming near,
When thy heart shrinks in fear,
And thy limbs fail,
Then raise thy hands and pray
To him who smooths thy way
Through the dark vale.

“Seest thou the eastern dawn,
Hearest thou in the red morn
The angel’s song?
Oh, lift thy drooping head,
Thou who in gloom and dread
Hast lain so long.

“Death comes to set thee free,
Oh, meet him cheerily
As thy true friend,
And all thy fears shall cease,
And in eternal peace
Thy penance end.”

“Amen!” said Sintram and Rolf, folding their hands; and while the last chords of the lute still resounded, the chaplain and the castellan came slowly and gently into the room.

“I bring a precious Christmas gift,” said the priest. “After many sad years, hope of reconciliation and peace of conscience are returning to a noble but long-disturbed mind. This concerns you, beloved pilgrim; and do you, my Sintram, with a joyful trust in God, take encouragement and example from it.”

“More than twenty years ago,” began the castellan at a sign from the chaplain—“more than twenty years ago I was a stout and active herdsman, and I drove my flock up the mountains. A young knight followed me, whom they called Weigand the Slender. He wanted to buy of me my favourite little lamb for his fair bride, and offered me much red gold for it. I sturdily refused. The over-

boldness of youth carried us both away. A stroke of his sword hurled me senseless down the precipice."

"Not killed?" asked the pilgrim in a scarce audible voice.

"I am no ghost," replied the castellan somewhat morosely; and then, after an earnest look from the priest, he continued more humbly: "I recovered slowly and in solitude, with the help of remedies that were easily found by me, a herdsman, in our productive valleys. When I came back into the world, no man knew me with my scarred face, and my head which had become bald. I heard a report going through the country that, on account of this deed of his, Sir Weigand the Slender had been rejected by his fair betrothed Verena, and how he had pined away, and she had wished to retire into a convent, but her father had persuaded her to marry the great knight Biorn. Then came into my heart a fearful thirst for vengeance, and I disowned my name and my kindred and my home, and entered the service of the mighty Biorn as a strange wild man, in order that Weigand the Slender should always be deemed a murderer, and that I might feed on his anguish. So have I fed upon it all these long years. I have revelled frightfully in his self-imposed banishment, in his cheerless return home, in his madness. But to-day"—and hot tears gushed from his eyes—"but to-day God has broken the hardness of my heart; and dear Sir Weigand, look upon yourself no more as a murderer, and say that you will forgive me, and pray for him who has done you so fearful an injury, and—" Sobs choked his words. He fell at the feet of the pilgrim, who with tears of joy pressed him to his heart in token of forgiveness.

XXI

THE joy of this hour passed from its first overpowering brightness to the calm, thoughtful aspect of daily life, and Weigand, now restored to health, laid aside the mantle with dead men's bones, saying:

"I had chosen for my penance to carry these fearful remains about with me, in the idea that perhaps some of them might have belonged to him whom I had murdered. Therefore I used to search for them round about in the deep beds of the mountain torrents, and in the high nests of the eagles and vultures. And while I was searching I sometimes—could it have been only an illusion?—I seemed to meet a being who was very like myself, but far more powerful, and still paler and more haggard."

An imploring look from Sintram stopped the flow of his words. With a gentle smile Weigand bowed toward him, and said:

"You know now all the deep, unutterably deep sorrow that preyed upon me. My fear of you, and my yearning love for you, are no longer without explanation to your kind heart. For, dear youth, though you may be like your fearful father, you have also the kind, gentle heart of your mother, and its reflection brightens your pallid, stern features like the glow of a morning sky that lights up ice-covered mountains and valleys. But, alas! how long have you lived alone even amid your fellow-creatures! And how long is it since you have seen your mother, my dearly loved Sintram?"

"I feel, too, as though a spring were gushing up in the barren wilderness of my heart," replied the youth, "and I should perchance be altogether restored could I but keep you long with me, and weep with you, dear friend. But I

have that within me which says that you will very soon be taken from me."

"I believe, indeed," said the pilgrim, "that my song the other day was very near my last, and that it contained a prediction full soon to be accomplished in me. But, as the soul of man is always like the thirsty ground, the more blessings God has bestowed on us the more earnestly do we look out for new ones, so would I crave for one more ere my life closes, as I would fain hope, in happiness. Yet, indeed, it can not be granted me," added he, with a faltering voice, "for I feel myself too utterly unworthy of such high grace."

"But it will be granted!" said the chaplain joyfully. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and I fear not to take him who is now clear from the stain of murder to receive a farewell from the holy and forgiving countenance of Verena."

The pilgrim stretched both his hands toward heaven, and an unbroken thanksgiving seemed to pour from his beaming eyes, and to brighten the smile that played on his lips.

Sintram looked sorrowfully on the ground, and sighed gently to himself: "Alas! happy he who dared go also!"

"My poor, good Sintram," said the chaplain in a tone of the softest kindness, "I understand you well, but the time is not yet come. The powers of evil will again raise their wrathful heads within you, and Verena must check both her own and your longing desires until all is pure in your spirit as in hers. Comfort yourself with the thought that God looks mercifully upon you, and that the joy so earnestly sought for will not fail to come—if not here, most assuredly beyond the grave."

But the pilgrim, as though awaking out of a trance,

rose with energy from his seat, and said: "Do you please to come forth with me, reverend chaplain? Before the sun appears in the heavens we could reach the convent gates, and I should not be far from heaven."

In vain did the chaplain and Rolf remind him of his weakness: he smiled, and said there could be no question about it, and he girded himself, and tuned the lute which he had asked leave to take with him. His decided manner overcame all opposition almost without words: and the chaplain had prepared himself for the journey when the pilgrim looked with much emotion at Sintram, who, oppressed with a strange weariness, had sunk half asleep on a couch, and he said: "Wait a moment. I know that he wants me to give him a soft lullaby." The pleased smile of the youth seemed to say yes, and the pilgrim, touching the strings with a light hand, sang these words:

"Sleep peacefully, dear boy,
Thy mother sends the song
That whispers round thy couch,
To lull thee all night long.
In silence and afar,
For thee she ever prays,
And longs once more in fondness
Upon thy face to gaze.

"And when thy waking cometh,
Then in thy every deed,
In all that may betide thee,
Unto her words give heed.
Oh, listen for her voice,
If it be yea or nay,
And though temptation meet thee,
Thou shalt not miss the way.

"If thou canst listen rightly,
And nobly onward go,
Then pure and gentle breezes
Around thy cheeks shall blow.
Then on thy peaceful journey
Her blessing thou shalt feel,
And though from thee divided,
Her presence o'er thee steal.

“Oh, safest, sweetest comfort!
Oh, blest and living light!
That strong in Heaven’s power
All terrors put to flight!
Rest quietly, sweet child,
And may the gentle numbers
Thy mother sends to thee,
Waft peace unto thy slumbers.”

Sintram fell into a deep sleep, smiling and breathing softly. Rolf and the castellan remained by his bed, while the two travellers pursued their way in the quiet starlight.

XXII

THE dawn had almost appeared when Rolf, who had been asleep, was wakened by low singing, and as he looked round he perceived with surprise that the sounds came from the lips of the castellan, who said, as if in explanation:

“So does Sir Weigand sing at the convent gates, and they are kindly opened to him.”

Upon which old Rolf fell asleep again, uncertain whether what had passed had been a dream or a reality. After awhile the bright sunshine awoke him again, and when he rose he saw the countenance of the castellan wonderfully illuminated by the red light of the morning sun, and altogether those features, once so fearful, were shining with a soft, nay, almost childlike mildness of expression. The mysterious man seemed to be the while listening to the motionless air, as if he were hearing a most pleasant discourse, and as Rolf was about to speak he made him a sign of entreaty to remain quiet, and he continued in his eager, listening attitude. At length he sank slowly and contentedly back in his seat, whispering:

“God be praised! She has granted his last prayer; he

will be laid in the burial-ground of the convent, and now he has forgiven me from the bottom of his heart. I can assure you that he is having a peaceful end."

Rolf did not dare ask a question or awake his lord; he felt as if one departed had spoken to him.

The castellan remained still for a long time, always with a bright smile on his face. At last he raised himself a little, again listened, and said:

"It is over. The sound of the bells is very sweet. We have overcome. Oh, how soft and easy does the good God make it to us!"

And so it came to pass. He stretched himself back as if weary, and his soul was freed from his careworn body.

Rolf now gently awoke his young knight, and pointed to the smiling face of the dead. And Sintram smiled too; he and his good esquire fell on their knees and prayed to God for the departed spirit. Then they rose and bore the cold body to the vaulted hall, and watched by it with holy candles until the return of the chaplain. That the pilgrim would not come back again they very well knew.

Toward midday, accordingly, the chaplain returned alone. He could scarcely do more than confirm what was already known to them. He only added a comforting and hopeful greeting from Sintram's mother to her son, and told that the blissful Weigand had fallen asleep like a tired child, while Verena with calm tenderness held a crucifix before him.

"And in eternal peace our pénance end!"

sang Sintram gently to himself, and they prepared a last resting-place for the now so peaceful castellan, and laid him therein with all due solemn rites.

The chaplain was obliged soon afterward to depart, but when bidding Sintram farewell he again said kindly to

him, "Your dear mother knows assuredly how gentle, and calm, and good you are now become!"

XXIII

IN the castle of Sir Biorn of the Fiery Eyes Christmas eve had not passed so brightly and happily, yet there too all had gone visibly according to God's will.

Folko, at the entreaty of the lord of the castle, had allowed Gabrielle to support him into the hall, and the three now sat at the round stone table whereon a sumptuous meal was laid. On either side were long tables, at which sat the retainers of both knights, in full armour, according to the custom of the North. Torches and lamps lighted the lofty hall with an almost dazzling brightness.

The deepest shades of night had gathered round, and Gabrielle softly reminded her wounded knight to withdraw. Biorn heard her, and said:

"You are right, fair lady, our knight needs rest. Only let us first keep up one more old honourable custom."

And at his sign four attendants brought in with pomp a great boar's head, which looked as if cut out of solid gold, and placed it in the middle of the stone table. Biorn's retainers rose with reverence, and took off their helmets; Biorn himself did the same.

"What means this?" asked Folko, very gravely.

"What your forefathers and mine have done on every Yule feast," answered Biorn. "We are going to make vows on the boar's head, and then pass round the goblet to their fulfilment."

"We no longer keep what our ancestors called the Yule

feast," said Folko; "we are good Christians, and we keep holy Christmas-tide."

"We may observe the one without leaving off the other," answered Biorn. "I hold my ancestors too dear to forget their knightly customs. Those who think otherwise may act according to their wisdom, but that shall not hinder me. I swear by the golden boar's head—" And he stretched out his hand toward it.

But Folko called out: "In the name of our Holy Saviour, forbear! Where I am, and still have breath and will, none celebrate the rites of the wild heathen."

Biorn of the Fiery Eyes glared angrily at him. The men of the two barons separated from each other with a hollow sound of rattling armour, and ranged themselves in two bodies on either side of the hall, each behind its leader. Already here and there helmets were fastened and visors closed.

"Bethink thee yet what thou art doing," said Biorn. "I was about to vow an eternal union with the house of Montfauçon, nay, even to bind myself to do it grateful homage; but if thou disturbest me in the customs that have come to me from my forefathers, look to thy safety, and the safety of all that is dear to thee. My wrath no longer knows any bounds!"

Folko made a sign to the pale Gabrielle to retire behind his followers, saying to her: "Be of good cheer, my noble wife; weaker Christians have borne, for the sake of God and of his holy Church, greater dangers than now appear to threaten us. Believe me, the Lord of Montfauçon is not so easily overcome."

Gabrielle obeyed, something comforted by Folko's fearless smile; but this smile inflamed still more the fury of Biorn. He again stretched out his hand toward the boar's head, as if about to make some dreadful vow, when Folko

snatched a gauntlet of Biorn's off the table, with which he with his unwounded left arm struck such a powerful blow on the gilded idol that it fell crashing to the ground, shivered to pieces. Biorn and his followers stood as if turned to stone. But soon swords were grasped by armed hands, shields were taken down from the walls, and an angry, threatening murmur sounded through the hall.

At a sign from Folko, one of his faithful retainers brought him a battle-axe; he swung it high in the air with his powerful left hand, and stood looking like an avenging angel as he spoke these words through the tumult with awful calmness:

"What seek ye, O ye deluded Northmen? What wouldst thou, sinful lord? You are indeed become heathen, and I hope to show you that it is not in my right arm alone that God has put strength for victory. But if you still can hear, listen to my words. Biorn, on this same accursed, and now, by God's help, shivered boar's head, thou didst lay thy hand when thou didst swear to sacrifice any inhabitants of the German towns that should fall into thy power. And Gotthard Lenz came, and Rudlieb came, driven on these shores by the storm. What didst thou then do, savage Biorn? What did you do at his bidding, you who were keeping the Yule feast with him? Try your fortune on me. The Lord will be with me as he was with those holy men. To arms! and"—he turned to his warriors—"let our battle-cry be Gotthard and Rudlieb!"

Then Biorn let drop his drawn sword; then his followers paused, and none among the Norwegians dared lift his eyes from the ground. By degrees they one by one disappeared from the hall; and at last Biorn stood quite alone opposite to the baron and his followers. He seemed hardly aware that he had been deserted, but he fell on his

knees, stretched out his shining sword, pointed to the broken boar's head, and said:

"Do with me as you have done with that; I deserve no better. I ask but one favour, only one: do not disgrace me, noble baron, by seeking shelter in another castle while you remain in Norway."

"I do not fear you," answered Folko, after some thought, "and as far as may be I freely forgive you." Then he drew the sign of the cross over the wild form of Biorn, and left the hall with Gabrielle. The retainers of the house of Montfauçon followed him proudly and silently.

The high spirit of the fierce lord of the castle was now quite broken, and he watched with increased humility every look of Folko and Gabrielle. But they withdrew more and more into the happy solitude of their own apartments, where they enjoyed in the midst of the sharp winter a bright spring-tide of love and happiness. The wounded condition of Folko did not hinder the evening delights of songs and music and poetry, but rather a new charm was added to them when the tall, handsome knight leaned on the arm of his delicate lady, and they thus, changing as it were their deportment and duties, walked slowly through the torch-lighted halls, scattering their kindly greetings like flowers among the crowds of men and women.

All this time little or nothing was heard of poor Sintram. The last wild outbreak of his father had increased the terror with which Gabrielle remembered the self-accusations of the youth; and the more resolutely Folko kept silence the more did she fear that some dreadful mystery lay beneath. Indeed, a secret shudder came over the knight when he thought on the pale, dark-haired youth. Sintram's repentance had bordered on settled despair; no one knew even what he was doing in the fortress of Evil Report on the Rocks of the Moon. Strange rumours were

brought by the retainers who had fled from it that the evil spirit had obtained complete power over Sintram, that no man could stay with him, and that the fidelity of the dark and mysterious castellan had cost him his life.

Folko could hardly drive away the fearful imagination that the lonely young knight was become a wicked magician. And perhaps, indeed, evil spirits did flit about the banished Sintram, but it was without his calling them up. In his dreams he often saw the wicked enchantress Venus, in her golden chariot drawn by winged cats, pass over the battlements of the stone fortress, and heard her say, mocking him: "Foolish Sintram, foolish Sintram, hadst thou but listened to the Little Master's words, thou wouldst now be in Helen's arms, and the Rocks of the Moon would be called the Rocks of Love, and the stone fortress would be the garden of roses. Thou wouldst have lost thy pale face and black, tangled hair—for thou art only enchanted, dear youth—and thine eyes would have beamed more softly, and thy cheeks bloomed more freshly, and thy hair would have been more golden than was that of Prince Paris when men wondered at his beauty. Oh, how Helen would have loved thee!" Then she showed him in a mirror his own figure kneeling before Gabrielle, who sank into his arms blushing as the morning. When he awoke from such dreams, he would seize in eager haste the sword and scarf which his lady had given him, as a shipwrecked man seizes the plank which is to save him, and, while the hot tears fell upon it, he would murmur to himself, "There was indeed one hour in my sad life when I was happy, and deserved it."

Once he sprang up at midnight after one of these dreams, only this time with a more thrilling horror than usual; for it had seemed to him that the features of the enchantress Venus had changed toward the end of her

speech as she looked down upon him with marvellous scorn, and she appeared to him almost to assume those of the hideous Little Master. The youth had no better means of calming his distracted mind than to throw the sword and scarf of Gabrielle over his shoulders, and to hasten forth under the solemn starry canopy of the wintry sky. He walked in deep thought backward and forward under the leafless oaks and the snow-laden firs, which grew on the high ramparts.

Then he heard a sorrowful cry of distress from the moat; it was as if some one were attempting to sing, but was stopped by excess of grief. Sintram exclaimed, "Who's there?" and all was still. When he was silent and again began his walk, the frightful groanings and moanings were heard afresh, as if they came from a dying person. Sintram overcame the horror that seemed to hold him back, and began in silence to climb down into the deep dry moat which was cut in the rock. He was soon so low that he could no longer see the stars shining; he saw a shrouded form move beneath him, and, sliding rapidly down the remainder of the steep descent, he stood near the groaning figure; it ceased its lamentations, and began to laugh like a maniac from beneath its long folded female garments.

"Oh, ho, my comrade! Oh, ho, my comrade! You are now going a little too fast: well, well, it is all right; and see now, you stand no higher than I, my pious, valiant youth! Take it patiently, take it patiently!"

"What do you want with me? Why do you laugh? why do you weep?" asked Sintram impatiently.

"I might ask you the same question," answered the dark figure, "and you would be less able to answer me than I to answer you. Why do you laugh? why do you weep? Poor creature! But I will show you a remarkable

thing in your fortress of which you know nothing. Give heed!"

And the shrouded figure began to scratch and scrape at the stones till a little iron door opened and showed a long passage, which led into deep darkness.

"Will you come with me?" whispered the strange being; "it is the shortest way to your father's castle. In half an hour we shall come out of this passage, and we shall be in your beauteous lady's apartment. King Menelaus shall lie in a magic sleep—leave that to me—and then you will take the slight, delicate form in your arms, and you will bring her to the Rocks of the Moon; so you will recover all that seemed lost by your former wavering."

Then Sintram might have been seen to stagger. He was shaken to and fro by the fever of passion and the stings of conscience; but at last, pressing the sword and scarf to his heart, he cried out: "Oh, that fairest, most glorious hour of my life! If I lose all other joys, I will hold fast that brightest hour!"

"A bright, glorious hour!" said the figure from under its veil, like an evil echo. "Do you know whom you then conquered? A good old friend, who only showed himself so sturdy in order to give you the glory of overcoming him. Will you convince yourself? Will you look?"

The dark garments of the little figure flew open, and Sintram saw the dwarf warrior in strange armour with the gold horn on his helmet and the curved spear in his hand; the very same whom Sintram thought he had slain on Niflung's Heath now stood before him, and grinned as he said:

"You see, my friend, everything in the wide world is made up of dreams and froth; wherefore hold fast the dream that delights you, and sip up the froth that refreshes you! Hasten to that underground passage; it leads up to

your angel Helen. Or would you first know your friend still better?"

His visor opened, and the hateful face of the Little Master glared upon the knight. Sintram asked, as if in a dream, "Art thou also that wicked enchantress Venus?"

"Something like her," answered the Little Master, laughing, "or rather she is something like me. And if you will only get disenchanted, and recover the beauty of Prince Paris, then, O Prince Paris!"—and his voice changed to an alluring song—"then, O Prince Paris, I shall be fair like you!"

At this moment the good Rolf appeared above on the rampart; a consecrated taper in his lantern shone down into the moat as he sought for the young knight. "In God's name, Sir Sintram," he called out, "what have you to do there with the spectre of him whom you slew on Niflung's Heath, and whom I never could bury?"

"Do you see? do you hear?" whispered the Little Master, and drew back into the darkness of the underground passage. "The wise man up there knows me well. You see your heroic feat came to nothing. Come, take the joys of life while you may!"

But Sintram sprang back with a strong effort into the circle of light made by the shining of the taper from above, and cried out: "Depart from me, unquiet spirit! I know well that I bear a name on me in which thou canst have no part."

Little Master rushed, in fear and rage, into the passage, and, yelling, shut the iron door behind him. It seemed as if he could still be heard groaning and roaring.

Sintram climbed up the wall of the moat, and made a sign to his foster-father not to speak to him. He only said: "One of my best joys—yes, the very best—has been taken from me; but, by God's help, I am not yet wholly lost."

In the earliest light of the following morning he and Rolf stopped up the entrance to the perilous passage with huge blocks of stone.

XXIV

THE long northern winter at last was ended; the fresh, green leaves rustled merrily in the woods, patches of soft moss appeared among the rocks, the valleys were clothed with grass, the brooks sparkled, the snow melted from all but the highest mountain-tops, and the bark that was ready to carry away Folko and Gabrielle danced on the sunny waves. The baron, who was now quite recovered, and strong and fresh as though his health had sustained no injury, stood one morning on the shore with his fair lady, and, full of glee at the prospect of returning to their home, the noble pair looked on with satisfaction at their attendants, who were busied in the ship with preparations for the voyage. Then said one of them, in the midst of a confused sound of talking:

“But what has appeared to me the most fearful and the most strange thing in this northern land is the stone fortress on the Rocks of the Moon. I have never, indeed, been inside it, but when I used to see it in our huntings, towering above the tall fir-trees, a tightness came over my breast, as if some unearthly beings were dwelling in it. And a few weeks ago, when the snow was still lying hard in the valleys, I came unawares quite close upon the strange building. The young knight Sintram was walking alone on the ramparts as the shades of twilight stole on, like the spirit of a departed knight, and he drew from the lute which he carried such soft, melancholy tones, and he sighed so deeply and sorrowfully . . .”

The voice of the speaker was drowned in the noise of the crowd, and as he also just then reached the ship with his package, which had been hastily fastened up, Folko and Gabrielle could not hear the rest of his speech. But the fair lady looked on her knight with eyes dim with tears, and sighed:

“Is it not behind those mountains that the Rocks of the Moon lie? The unhappy Sintram makes me sad at heart.”

“I understand you, sweet gracious lady, and the pure compassion which fills your heart,” replied Folko, and instantly ordered his swift-footed steed to be brought. He placed his noble lady under the charge of his retainers, and, leaping into the saddle, he pursued his way, followed by the grateful smiles of Gabrielle, along the valley that led toward the stone fortress.

Sintram was seated near the drawbridge, touching the strings of the lute, and shedding tears on the golden chords, almost exactly as Montfauçon's esquires had described him. Suddenly a cloudy shadow passed over him, and he looked up, expecting to see a flight of cranes in the air; but the sky was clear and blue. While the young knight was still wondering, a long bright spear fell at his feet from a battlement of the armoury turret. “Take it up; make good use of it! your foe is near at hand! Near also is the downfall of your cherished hopes of happiness!” Thus he heard it distinctly whispered in his ear; and it seemed to him that he saw the shadow of the Little Master glide close by him to a neighbouring cleft in the rock. But at the same time also a tall, gigantic, haggard figure passed along the valley, in some measure like the departed pilgrim, only much, very much larger, and he raised his long, bony arm with an awfully threatening air, then disappeared in an ancient tomb.

At the same instant Sir Folko of Montfauçon came swiftly as the wind up the Rocks of the Moon, and he must have seen something of those strange apparitions, for as he stopped close behind Sintram he looked rather pale, and he asked low and earnestly:

"Sir Knight, who are those two with whom you were just now holding converse here?"

"The good God knows," answered Sintram. "I know them not."

"If the good God does but know!" cried Montfauçon. "But I fear me that he knows you not, nor your deeds."

"You speak strangely harsh words," said Sintram. "Yet ever since that evening of misery—alas! and even long before—I have no right to complain of anything you may say or do. Dear sir, you may believe me, I know not those fearful companions; I call them not; and I know not what terrible curse it is that binds them to my footsteps. The merciful God, as I would hope, is mindful of me the while, as a faithful shepherd does not forget even the worst and most widely strayed of his flock, but calls after it with an anxious voice in the gloomy wilderness."

Then the anger of the baron was quite melted. Two tears stood in his eyes, and he said:

"No, assuredly, God has not forgotten you; only do you not forget your gracious God. I did not come to rebuke you—I came to bless you in Gabrielle's name and in my own. The Lord preserve you, the Lord guide you, the Lord lift you up. And, Sintram, on the far-off shores of Normandy I shall bear you in mind, and I shall hear how you struggle against the curse that darkens your unhappy life, and if you ever obtain the victory over it, and overcome in the evil day, then you shall receive from me a token of love and reward more precious than either you or I can understand at this moment."

The words flowed prophetically from the baron's lips; he himself was only half conscious of what he said. With a kind salutation he turned his noble steed, and again rode down the valley toward the sea-shore.

"Fool, fool, thrice a fool!" whispered the angry voice of the Little Master in Sintram's ear; but old Rolf was singing his morning hymn in clear tones within the castle, and the last lines were these:

"Whom worldlings scorn,
Who lives forlorn,
On God's own word doth rest;
With heavenly light,
His path is bright,
His lot among the blest."

Then a holy joy took possession of Sintram's heart, and he looked around him still more gladly than in the hour when Gabrielle gave him the scarf and sword and Folko dubbed him knight.

XXV

THE baron and his lovely lady were sailing across the broad sea with favouring gales of spring—nay, the coast of Normandy had already appeared above the waves—but still was Biorn of the Fiery Eyes sitting gloomy and speechless in his castle. He had taken no leave of his guests. In his soul there was more of proud fear of Montfauçon than of reverential love for him, especially since the adventure with the boar's head, and the thought was bitter to his haughty spirit that the great baron, the flower and glory of their whole race, should have come in peace to visit him, and should now be departing in displeasure, in stern, reproachful displeasure. He had constantly before

his mind, and it never failed to bring fresh pangs, the remembrance of how all had come to pass, and how all might have gone otherwise; and he was always fancying he could hear the songs in which after generations would recount this voyage of the great Folko, and the worthlessness of the savage Biorn. At length, full of fierce anger, he cast away the fetters of his troubled spirit, he burst out of the castle with all his horsemen, and began to carry on a warfare more fearful and more lawless than any in which he had yet been engaged.

Sintram heard the sound of his father's war-horn, and, committing the stone fortress to old Rolf, he sprang forth armed for the combat. But the flames of the cottages and farms on the mountains rose before him, and showed him, written as if in characters of fire, what kind of war his father was waging. Yet he went on toward the spot where the army was mustered, but only to offer his mediation, affirming that he would not lay his hand on his good sword in so abhorred a service, even though the stone fortress, and his father's castle besides, should fall before the vengeance of their enemies. Biorn hurled his spear against his son with mad fury. The deadly weapon whizzed past him. Sintram remained standing with his visor raised; he did not move one limb in his defence when he said:

"Father, do what you will, but I join not in your godless warfare."

Biorn of the Fiery Eyes laughed scornfully: "It seems that I am always to have a spy over me here; my son succeeds to the dainty French knight!" But nevertheless he came to himself, he accepted Sintram's mediation, made amends for the injuries he had done, and returned gloomily to his castle. Sintram went back to the Rocks of the Moon.

Such occurrences were frequent after that time. It

went so far that Sintram came to be looked upon as the protector of all those whom his father pursued with relentless fury; but, nevertheless, sometimes his own wildness would carry the young knight away to accompany his fierce father in his fearful deeds. Then Biorn used to laugh with horrible pleasure, and to say:

"See there, my son, how the flames we have lighted blaze up from the villages, as the blood spouts up from the wounds our swords have made! It is plain to me, however much you may pretend to the contrary, that you are, and that you will ever remain, my true and beloved heir!"

After such terrible wanderings Sintram could find no comfort but in hastening to the chaplain of Drontheim, and confessing to him his misery and his sins. The chaplain would freely absolve him after due penance had been performed, and again raise the broken-hearted and repenting youth; but he would often say:

"Oh, how nearly had you reached your last trial and gained the victory, and looked on Verena's countenance, and atoned for all! Now you have thrown yourself back for years. Think, my son, on the shortness of man's life; if you are always falling back anew, how will you ever reach the summit on this side the grave?"

Years came and went, and Biorn's hair was white as snow, and the youth Sintram had reached middle age; old Rolf was now scarcely able to leave the stone fortress, and sometimes he said:

"I feel it a burden that my life should still be prolonged, but also there is much comfort in it, for I shall think that the good God has in store for me here below some great happiness; and it must be something in which you are concerned, my beloved Sir Sintram, for what else in the whole world could rejoice my heart?"

But, nevertheless, everything remained as it was, only Sintram's fearful dreams at Christmas-time each year rather increased than diminished in horror. Again the holy season was drawing near, and the mind of the sorely afflicted knight was more troubled than ever. Sometimes, if he had been reckoning up the nights that were to elapse before it, a cold sweat would stand on his forehead, while he said, "Mark my words, dear old foster-father, this time something most awfully decisive lies before me."

One evening he felt an overwhelming anxiety about his father. It seemed to him that the Prince of Darkness was going up to Biorn's castle; and in vain did Rolf remind him that the snow was lying deep in the valleys, in vain did he suggest that the knight might be overtaken by his frightful dreams in the lonely mountains during the night-time.

"Nothing can be worse to me than remaining here would be," replied Sintram.

He took his horse from the stable and rode forth in the gathering darkness. The noble steed slipped and stumbled and fell in the trackless ways, but his rider always helped him up and urged him only more swiftly and eagerly toward the object he longed and yet dreaded to reach. Nevertheless, he might never have arrived at it had not his faithful hound Skovmark kept with him. The dog sought out the lost track for his beloved master, and invited him into it with joyous barkings, and warned him by his howls against hidden precipices and treacherous ice under the snow. Thus they arrived about midnight at Biorn's castle. The windows of the hall shone opposite to them with a brilliant light, as though some great feast were being kept there; and confused sounds, as of singing, met their ears. Sintram gave his horse hastily to some retainers in the courtyard, and ran up the steps, while Skovmark stayed by

the well-known horse. A good esquire came toward Sintram within the castle, and said:

"God be praised, my dear master, that you are come, for surely nothing good is going on above. But take heed to yourself, also, and be not deluded. Your father has a guest with him—and, as I think, a very evil one."

Sintram shuddered as he threw open the doors. A little man in the dress of a miner was sitting with his back toward him; the armour had been for some time past again ranged round the stone table, so that only two places were ever left empty. The seat opposite the door had been taken by Biorn of the Fiery Eyes; and the dazzling light of the torches fell upon his features with such a red glare that he most fully established his right to that fearful surname.

"Father, whom have you here with you?" cried Sintram; and his suspicions rose to certainty as the miner turned round, and the detestable face of the Little Master grinned from under the dark hood he wore.

"Yes, just see, my fair son," said the wild Biorn; "you have not been here for a long while, and so to-night this jolly comrade has paid me a visit, and your place has been taken. But throw one of the suits of armour out of the way, and put a seat for yourself instead of it, and come and drink with us, and be merry."

"Yes, do so, Sir Sintram," said the Little Master, with a laugh. "Nothing worse could come of it than that the broken pieces of armour might clatter somewhat strangely one against the other; or, at most, that the disturbed spirit of him to whom the suit belonged might look over your shoulder; but he would not drink up any of our wine—ghosts have nothing to do with that. So now fall to!"

Biorn joined in the laughter of the hideous stranger with wild mirth; and while Sintram was mustering up his

whole strength not to lose his senses at such terrible words, and was fixing a calm, steady look on the Little Master's face, the old man cried out:

"Why do you look at him so? Is it that you fancy there is a mirror before you? Now that you are together, I do not see it so much; but awhile ago I thought you were like enough to each other to be mistaken."

"God forbid!" said Sintram; and he walked up close to the fearful apparition, saying: "I command you, detestable stranger, to depart from this castle, in right of my authority as my father's heir, as a consecrated knight, and as a Christian man!"

Biorn seemed as if he wished to oppose himself to this command with all his savage might. The Little Master muttered to himself: "You are not by any means the master in this house, pious knight; you never have lighted a fire on this hearth."

Then Sintram drew the sword which Gabrielle had given him, held the cross formed by the hilt before the eyes of his evil guest, and said calmly, but with a powerful voice, "Worship, or fly!"

And he fled, the frightful stranger—he fled with such lightning speed that it could scarcely be seen whether he had sprung through the window or the door. But in going he overthrew some of the armour, the tapers went out, and it seemed that the pale-blue flame which lighted up the hall in a marvellous manner gave a fulfilment to the Little Master's former words, and that the spirits of those to whom the armour had belonged were leaning over the table grinning fearfully.

Both the father and the son were filled with horror, but each chose an opposite way to save himself. Biorn wished to have his hateful guest back again; and the power of his will was seen when the Little Master's step resounded

anew on the stairs, and his hard brown hand shook the lock of the door. On the other hand, Sintram ceased not to say within himself: "We are lost if he comes back! We are lost to all eternity if he comes back!" And he fell on his knees, and prayed fervently from the depth of his troubled heart to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then the Little Master left the door; and again Biorn willed him to return, and again Sintram's prayers drove him away. So went on this strife of wills throughout the long night; and fierce whirlwinds raged the while around the castle, till all the household thought the end of the world was come. At length the dawn of morning appeared through the windows of the hall; the fury of the storm was lulled; Biorn sank back powerless in slumber on his seat; peace and hope were restored to the inmates of the castle; and Sintram, pale and exhausted, went out to breathe the dewy air of the mild winter's morning before the castle gates.

XXVI

THE faithful Skovmark followed his master, caressing him; and when Sintram fell asleep on a stone seat in the wall, he lay at his feet, keeping guard. Suddenly he pricked up his ears, looked round with delight, and bounded joyfully down the mountain. Just afterward the chaplain of Drontheim appeared among the rocks, and the good beast went up to him as if to greet him, and then again ran back to the knight to announce a welcome visitor.

Sintram opened his eyes, to feel the pleasure of a child whose Christmas gifts have been placed at his bedside to surprise him. For the chaplain smiled at him as he never yet had seen him smile. There was in it a token of vic-

tory and blessing, or at least of the near approach of both.

"You accomplished much yesterday, very much," said the holy priest, and his hands were joined and his eyes full of bright tears. "I thank God in your behalf, my noble knight. Verena knows all, and she too blesses God. I do indeed now dare hope that the time will soon come when you may appear before her. But, Sintram, Sir Sintram, there is need of haste—for the old man above requires speedy aid, and you have still a heavy—as I hope the last—yet a most heavy trial to undergo for his sake. Arm yourself, my knight, arm yourself even with temporal weapons. In truth, this time only spiritual armour is needed, but it always befits a knight, as well as a monk, to wear, in the decisive moments of his life, the entire solemn garb of his station. If it so please you, we will go directly to Drontheim together. You must return thence to-night. Such is the tenor of the hidden decree, which has been dimly unfolded to Verena's foresight. Here still is much that is wild and distracting, and you have great need to-day of calm preparation."

With humble joy Sintram bowed his assent, and called for his horse and for a suit of armour. "Only," added he, "let not any of that armour be brought which last night was overthrown in the hall."

His orders were quickly obeyed. The arms that were fetched, adorned with fine engraved work, the simple helmet, formed rather like that of an esquire than a knight, the lance of almost gigantic size, which belonged to the suit—on all these the chaplain gazed in deep thought and with melancholy emotion. At last, when Sintram with the help of his esquires was well-nigh equipped, the holy priest spoke:

"Wonderful are the ways of God's providence! See,

dear Sintram, this armour and this spear were formerly those of Sir Weigand the Slender, and with them he did many mighty deeds. When he was tended by your mother in the castle, and when even your father still showed himself kind and courteous, he asked, as a favour, that his armour and his lance should be allowed to hang in Biorn's armoury—Weigand himself, as you well know, intended to build a cloister and to live there as a monk—and he put his old esquire's helmet with it, instead of another, because he was still wearing that one when he first saw the fair Verena's angelic face. How wondrously does it now come to pass that these very arms which so long have been laid aside should have been brought to you for the decisive hour of your life! To me, as far as my shortsighted human wisdom can tell, to me it seems truly a very solemn token, but one that is full of high and glorious promise."

Sintram stood now in complete array, composed and stately, and from his tall, slender figure might have been supposed still in early youth had not the deep lines of care that furrowed his countenance shown him to be advanced in years.

"Who has placed boughs on the head of my war-horse?" asked Sintram of the esquires with displeasure. "I am not a conqueror, nor a wedding guest. And, besides, there are no boughs now but these red and yellow crackling leaves of the oak, dull and dead like the season itself."

"Sir Knight, I know not myself," answered an esquire, "but it seemed to me that I could not do otherwise."

"Let it be," said the chaplain. "I feel that this also is sent as a token full of meaning from the right source."

Then the knight threw himself into his saddle; the priest went beside him, and they rode slowly and silently

toward Drontheim. The faithful dog followed his master. When the lofty castle of Drontheim appeared in sight, a gentle smile spread itself over Sintram's countenance, like a gleam of sunshine on a wintry valley.

"God has done great things for me," said he. "I once rushed from here, a fearfully wild boy; I now come back, a penitent man. I trust that good is yet in store for my poor troubled life."

The chaplain assented kindly, and soon afterward the travellers passed under the echoing vaulted gateway into the castle yard. At a sign from the priest, the retainers approached with respectful haste and took charge of the horses; then he and Sintram went through long winding passages, and up many steps, to the remote chamber which the chaplain had chosen for his own: far away from the noise of men, and near to the clouds and the stars. There the two passed a quiet day in devout prayer and earnest reading of Holy Scripture. When the evening began to close in, the chaplain arose and said:

"And now, my knight, get ready your horse, and mount and ride back again to your father's castle. A toilsome way lies before you, and I dare not go with you. But I can, and I will, call upon the Lord for you all through the long, fearful night. O beloved instrument of the Most High, you will yet not be lost!"

Thrilling with strange forebodings, but nevertheless strong and vigorous in spirit, Sintram did according to the holy man's desire. The sun set as the knight approached a long valley, strangely shut in by rocks, through which lay the road to his father's castle.

XXVII

BEFORE entering the rocky pass, the knight, with a prayer of thanksgiving, looked back once more at the castle of Drontheim. There it was, so vast and quiet and peaceful, the bright windows of the chaplain's high chamber still lighted up by the last gleam of the sun, which had already disappeared. In front of Sintram was the gloomy valley, looking as if prepared to be his grave.

Then came toward him some one riding on a small horse, and Skovmark, who had gone up to the stranger as if to find out who he was, now ran back with his tail between his legs and his ears put back, howling and whining, and crept terrified under his master's war-horse. But even the noble steed appeared to have forgotten his once fearless and warlike ardour. He trembled violently, and when the knight would have turned him toward the stranger he reared and snorted and plunged, and began to throw himself backward. It was with difficulty that Sintram's strength and horsemanship got the better of him, and he was all white with foam when Sintram came up to the unknown traveller.

"You have cowardly animals with you," said the latter in a low, smothered voice.

Sintram was unable in the increasing darkness rightly to distinguish what kind of being he saw before him; only a very pallid face, which at first he had thought was covered with freshly fallen snow, met his eyes from amid the long hanging garments in which the figure was clothed. It seemed that the stranger carried a small box wrapped up; his little horse, as if wearied out, bent his head toward the ground, whereby a bell, which hung from the wretched torn bridle under his neck, was made to give a strange sound. After a short silence, Sintram replied:

"Noble steeds avoid those of a worse race, because they are ashamed of them; and the boldest dogs are attacked by a secret terror at sight of forms to which they are not accustomed. I have no cowardly animals with me."

"Good, Sir Knight; then ride with me through the valley."

"I am going through the valley, but I want no companions."

"But perhaps I want one. Do you not see that I am unarmed? And at this season, at this hour, there are frightful, unearthly beasts about."

Just then, as if to confirm the words of the stranger, a thing swung itself down from one of the nearest trees covered with hoar frost—no one could say if it were a snake or lizard, it curled and twisted itself, and appeared to be going to slide down upon the knight or his companion. Sintram levelled his spear, and pierced the creature through. But with the most hideous contortions it fixed itself firmly on the spear head, and in vain did the knight endeavour to rub it off against the rocks or the trees. Then he let his spear rest upon his right shoulder, with the point behind him, so that the horrible beast no longer met his sight, and he said with good courage to the stranger:

"It does seem, indeed, that I could help you, and I am not forbidden to have an unknown stranger in my company; so let us push on bravely into the valley!"

"Help!" so resounded the solemn answer. "Not help. I, perhaps, may help thee. But God have mercy upon thee if the time should ever come when I could no longer help thee! Then thou wouldst be lost, and I should become very frightful to thee. But we will go through the valley, I have thy knightly word for it. Come!"

They rode forward, Sintram's horse still showing signs of fear, the faithful dog still whining, but both obedient to their master's will. The knight was calm and steadfast. The snow had slipped down from the smooth rocks, and by the light of the rising moon could be seen various strange twisted shapes on their sides, some looking like snakes, and some like human faces; but they were only formed by the veins in the rock, and the half-bare roots of trees that had planted themselves in that desert place with capricious firmness. High above, and at a great distance, the castle of Drontheim, as if to take leave, appeared again through an opening in the rocks. The knight then looked keenly at his companion, and almost felt as if Weigand the Slender were riding beside him.

"In God's name," cried he, "art thou not the shade of that departed knight who suffered and died for Verena?"

"I have not suffered, I have not died, but ye suffer and ye die, poor mortals!" murmured the stranger. "I am not Weigand. I am that other one, who was so like him, and whom also thou hast met before now in the wood."

Sintram strove to free himself from the terror that came over him at these words. He looked at his horse; it appeared to him entirely changed. In the uncertain moonlight the dry, many-coloured oak leaves on its head were waving like the flames round a sacrifice. He looked down again to see after his faithful Skovmark. Fear had likewise most wondrously changed him. On the ground in the middle of the road were dead men's bones, and hideous lizards were crawling about, and, in defiance of the wintry season, poisonous mushrooms were growing up all round.

"Can this be still my horse on which I am riding?" said the knight to himself in a low voice; "and can that trembling beast running at my side be my own dog?"

Then some one called after him: "Stop! Stop! Take me also with you!"

Looking round, Sintram perceived a small, frightful figure with horns, and a face partly like a wild boar's and partly like a bear's, walking along on its hind legs, which were those of a horse, and in its hand was a strange, hideous weapon shaped like a hook or a sickle. It was the being who had been wont to trouble him in his dreams, and, alas! it was also the wretched Little Master himself, who, laughing wildly, stretched out a long claw toward the knight.

The bewildered Sintram murmured: "I must have fallen asleep! and now my dreams are coming over me!"

"You are awake," replied the rider of the little horse, "but you know me also in your dreams. For behold! I am Death." And his garments fell from him, and a mouldering skeleton appeared, its ghastly head crowned with serpents; that which he had kept hidden under his mantle was an hour-glass with the sand almost run out. Death held it toward the knight in his fleshless hand. The bell at the neck of the little horse gave forth a solemn sound. It was a passing-bell.

"Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" prayed Sintram, and full of earnest devotion he rode after Death, who beckoned him on.

"He has not got you yet! He has not got you yet!" screamed the fearful fiend. "Give yourself up to me rather. In one instant—for swift are your thoughts, swift is my might—in one instant you shall be in Normandy. Helen still blooms in beauty as when she departed hence, and this very night she would be yours." And once again he began his unholy praises of Gabrielle's loveliness, and Sintram's heart glowed like wild-fire in his weak breast.

Death said nothing more, but raised the hour-glass in his right hand higher and higher, and as the sand now ran

out more quickly a soft light streamed from the glass over Sintram's countenance, and then it seemed to him as if eternity in all its calm majesty were rising before him, and a world of confusion dragging him back with a deadly grasp.

"I command thee, wild form that followest me," cried he, "I command thee in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to cease from thy seducing words, and to call thyself by that name by which thou art recorded in Holy Writ!"

A name, which sounded more fearful than a thunder-clap, burst despairingly from the lips of the tempter, and he disappeared.

"He will return no more," said Death in a kindly tone.

"And now I am become wholly thine, my stern companion?"

"Not yet, my Sintram. I shall not come to thee till many, many years are past. But thou must not forget me the while."

"I will keep the thought of thee steadily before my soul, thou fearful yet wholesome monitor, thou awful yet loving guide!"

"Oh, I can truly appear very gentle."

And so it proved, indeed. His form became more softly defined in the increasing gleam of light that shone from the hour-glass, the features which had been awful in their sternness wore a gentle smile, the crown of serpents became a bright palm wreath, instead of the horse appeared a white misty cloud on which the moonbeams played, and the bell gave forth sounds as of sweet lullabies. Sintram thought he could hear these words amid them:

"The world and Satan are o'ercome,
Before thee gleams eternal light.
Warrior, who hast won the strife,
Save from darkest shades of night
Him before whose aged eyes
All my terrors soon shall rise."

The knight well knew that his father was meant, and he urged on his noble steed, which now obeyed his master willingly and gladly, and the faithful dog also again ran beside him fearlessly. Death had disappeared, but in front of Sintram floated a bright morning cloud, which continued visible after the sun had risen in the clear winter sky to cheer and warm the earth.

XXVIII

"HE is dead! the horrors of that fearful night of storm and tempest have killed him!" Thus said, about this time, some of Biorn's retainers, who had not been able to bring him back to his senses since the morning of the day before; they had made a couch of wolf and bear skins for him in the great hall, in the midst of the armour that still lay scattered around. One of the esquires said with a low sigh, "The Lord have mercy on his poor wild soul!" Just then the warder blew his horn from his tower, and a trooper came into the room with a look of surprise.

"A knight is coming here," said he; "a wonderful knight. I could have taken him for our Lord Sintram—but a bright morning cloud floats so close before him, and throws over him such clear light, that one could fancy red flowers were showered down upon him. Besides, his horse has a reddish wreath of flowers on his head, which was never a custom of the son of our dead lord."

"It was exactly such a one," replied another, "that I wove for him yesterday. He was not pleased with it at first, but afterward he let it remain."

"But why did you do that?"

"It seemed to me as if I heard a voice singing again

and again in my ear: 'Victory! victory! the noblest victory! The knight rides forth to victory!' And then I saw a branch of our oldest oak-tree stretched toward me, which had kept on almost all its red and yellow leaves in spite of the snow. So I did according to what I had heard sung; and I plucked some of the leaves, and wove a triumphal wreath for the noble war-horse. At the same time Skovmark—you know the faithful beast had always a great dislike to Biorn, and therefore had gone to the stable with the horse—Skovmark jumped upon me, fawning and seeming pleased, as if he wanted to thank me for my work; and such noble animals understand well about good prognostics."

They heard the sound of Sintram's spurs on the stone steps and Skovmark's joyous bark. At that instant the supposed corpse of old Biorn sat up, looked around with rolling, staring eyes, and asked of the terrified retainers in a hollow voice: "Who comes there, ye people? who comes there? I know it is my son. But who comes with him? On the answer to that hangs the decision of my fate. For see, good people, Gotthard and Rudlieb have prayed much for me: yet if the Little Master comes with him I am lost in spite of them!"

"You are not lost, my beloved father!" Sintram's kind voice was heard to say as he softly opened the door and the bright red morning cloud floated in with him.

Biorn clasped his hands, cast a look of thankfulness up to heaven, and said, smiling: "Yes, praised be God! it is the right companion! It is sweet, gentle Death!" And then he made a sign to his son to approach, saying: "Come here, my deliverer; come blessed of the Lord, that I may relate to you all that has passed within me."

As Sintram now sat close by his father's couch, all who were in the room perceived a remarkable and striking

change. For old Biorn, whose whole countenance, and not his eyes alone, had been wont to have a fiery aspect, was now quite pale, almost like white marble; while, on the other hand, the cheeks of the once deadly pale Sintram glowed with a bright bloom, like that of early youth. It was caused by the morning cloud, which still shone upon him, and the presence of which in the room was rather felt than seen; but it produced a gentle thrill in every heart.

"See, my son," began the old man, softly and mildly, "I have lain for a long time in a deathlike sleep, and have known nothing of what was going on around me; but within—ah! within—I have had but too entire consciousness! I thought my soul would be destroyed by the eternal anguish; and yet again I felt with much greater horror that my soul was undying like that anguish. Beloved son, your cheeks that glowed so brightly are beginning to grow pale at my words. I refrain from more. But let me relate to you something more cheering: far, far away, I could see a bright, lofty church, where Gotthard and Rudlieb Lenz were kneeling and praying for me. Gotthard had grown very old, and looked like one of our mountains covered with snow, on which the evening sun is shining; and Rudlieb was also an elderly man, but very vigorous and very strong; and they both, with all their strength and vigour, were calling upon God to aid me, their enemy. Then I heard a voice like that of an angel, saying: 'His son does the most for him! He must this night wrestle with Death and with the Fallen One! His victory will be victory, and his defeat will be defeat, for the old man as well as for himself.' Thereupon I awoke; and I knew that all depended upon whom you would bring with you. You have conquered. Next to God, the praise be to you!"

"Gotthard and Rudlieb have helped much," replied Sintram; "and, beloved father, so have the fervent prayers

of the chaplain of Drontheim. I felt, in the midst of temptation and deadly fear, how the heaven-directed prayers of good men floated round me and aided me."

"I am most willing to believe that, my noble son, and everything you say to me," answered the old man; and at the same moment the chaplain also coming in, Biorn stretched out his hand toward him with a smile of peace and joy. And now all seemed to be surrounded with a bright circle of unity and blessedness. "But see," said old Biorn, "how the faithful Skovmark jumps upon me now, and tries to caress me. It is not long since he used always to howl with terror when he saw me."

"My dear lord," said the chaplain, "there is a spirit dwelling in good beasts, although they are unconscious of it."

As the day wore on, the stillness in the hall increased. The last hour of the aged knight was drawing near, but he met it calmly and fearlessly. The chaplain and Sintram prayed beside his couch. The retainers knelt devoutly around. At length the dying man said, "Is that the vesper bell in Verena's cloister?" and Sintram made a sign to express his undoubting belief that it was, while warm tears fell on the colourless cheeks of his father. A gleam shone in the old man's eyes; the morning cloud stood close over him; and then the gleam, the morning cloud, and life with them departed from him.

XXIX

A FEW days afterward Sintram stood in the parlour of the convent, and waited with a beating heart for his mother to appear. He had seen her for the last time when, a slum-

bering child, he had been wakened by her tender, farewell kisses, and then had fallen asleep again to wonder in his dreams what his mother had wanted with him, and to seek her in vain the next morning in the castle and in the garden. The chaplain was now at his side, rejoicing in the chastened rapture of the knight, whose fierce spirit had been overcome, on whose cheeks a soft reflection of that solemn morning cloud still lingered.

The inner doors opened. In her white veil, stately and noble, the Lady Verena came forward, and with a heavenly smile she beckoned her son to approach the grating. There could be no thought here of any passionate outbreak, whether of sorrow or of joy. The holy peace that had its abode within these walls would have found its way to a heart less tried and less purified than that which beats in Sintram's bosom. Shedding some placid tears, the son knelt before his mother, kissed her flowing garments through the grating, and felt as if he were in paradise—where every wish and every care is hushed.

"Beloved mother," said he, "let me become a recluse like you. Then I will betake myself to the cloister yonder; and perhaps I might one day be deemed worthy to be your confessor, if illness or the weakness of old age should keep the good chaplain within the castle of Drontheim."

"That would be a sweet, quietly-happy life, my good child," replied the Lady Verena; "but such is not your vocation. You must continue to be a bold, powerful knight, and you must spend the long life which is almost always granted to us children of the North in succouring the weak, in keeping down the lawless, and in still another more bright and honourable employment, which I now rather dimly foresee than clearly know."

"God's will be done!" said the knight, and he rose full of self-devotion and firmness.

"That is my good son," said the Lady Verena. "Ah! how many sweet, calm joys spring up for us! See, already is our longing desire of meeting again satisfied, and you will never more be so entirely estranged from me. Every week on this day you will come back to me, and you will relate what glorious deeds you have done, and take back with you my advice and my blessing."

"Am I not once more a good and happy child!" cried Sintram joyously; "only that the merciful God has given me in addition the strength of a man in body and spirit. Oh, how blessed is that son to whom it is allowed to gladden his mother's heart with the blossoms and the fruit of his life!"

Thus he left the quiet cloister's shade, joyful in spirit and richly laden with blessings, to enter on his noble career. He was not content with going about wherever there might be a rightful cause to defend or evil to be averted; the gates of the now hospitable castle stood always open also to receive and shelter every stranger; and old Rolf, who was almost grown young again at sight of his lord's excellence, was established as seneschal. The winter of Sintram's life set in bright and glorious, and it was only at times that he would sigh within himself and say: "Ah! Montfauçon, ah! Gabrielle, if I could dare to hope that you have quite forgiven me!"

XXX

THE spring had come in its brightness to that northern land, when one morning Sintram turned his horse homeward after a successful encounter with one of the most formidable disturbers of the peace of his neighbour-

hood. His horsemen rode after him, singing as they went. As they drew near the castle they heard the sound of joyous notes on the horn. "Some welcome visitor must have arrived," said the knight, and he spurred his horse to a quicker pace over the dewy meadow. While still at some distance they descried old Rolf busily engaged in preparing a table for the morning meal under the trees in front of the castle gates. From all the turrets and battlements floated banners and flags in the fresh morning breeze, and esquires were running to and fro in their gayest apparel. As soon as the good Rolf saw his master, he clapped his hands joyfully over his gray head and hastened into the castle. Immediately the wide gates were thrown open, and Sintram as he entered was met by Rolf, whose eyes were filled with tears of joy as he pointed toward three noble forms that were following him.

Two men of high stature—one in extreme old age, the other gray-headed, and the two remarkably alike—were leading between them a fair young boy, in a page's dress of blue velvet, richly embroidered with gold. The two old men wore the dark velvet dress of German burghers, and massive gold chains and large shining medals were hanging round their necks.

Sintram never before had seen his honoured guests, and yet he felt as if they were well-known and valued friends. The very aged man reminded him of his dying father's words about the snow-covered mountains lighted up by the evening sun; and then he remembered, he could scarcely tell how, that he had heard Folko say that one of the highest mountains of that sort in his southern land was called the St. Gotthard. And at the same time he knew that the old but still vigorous man on the other side was named Rudlieb. But the boy who stood between them—ah! Sintram's humility dared scarcely form a hope

as to who he might be, however much his features, so noble and soft, called up two highly honoured images before his mind. Then the aged Gotthard Lenz, the prince of old men, advanced with a solemn step, and said:

“This is the noble boy Engeltram of Montfauçon, the only son of the great baron, and his father and mother send him to you, Sir Sintram, knowing well your holy and glorious knightly career, that you may bring him up to all the honourable and valiant deeds of this northern land, and may make of him a Christian knight, like yourself.”

Sintram threw himself from his horse. Engeltram of Montfauçon held the stirrup gracefully for him, checking the retainers, who pressed forward, with these words: “I am the noblest born esquire of this knight, and the service nearest to his person belongs to me.”

Sintram knelt on the turf to offer a silent prayer; then lifting up the image of Folko and Gabrielle in his arms toward the rising sun, he cried, “With the help of God, my Engeltram, you will become glorious as that sun, and your course will be like his!”

And Rolf said, as he wept for joy, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.”

Gotthard Lenz and Rudlieb were pressed to Sintram’s heart, and the chaplain of Drontheim, who just then came from Verena’s cloister to bring a joyful greeting to her brave son, stretched out his hands to bless them all.

THE END

